BOVARD: THE BOOK ON TORTURE ■ HITCHENS: CUBA AFTER CASTRO

OCTOBER 9, 2006

The American Conservative



The Bright Promise of Failure in Iraq

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SEE OUR NEW WEBSITE

I just read your article by Michael Brendan Dougherty called "Suicide of Brewster" (Sept. 11), and I am amazed that he is so obviously unaware of many pertinent facts. Especially troubling is his apparent ignorance about the village's many new and unprecedented efforts to enforce resource, traffic, housing, and parking laws. At least inform him that no village in America has the power or the authority to enforce federal immigration laws.

Here are just some of the concrete measures that the village has already accomplished to enforce what we call quality-of-life codes: we have hired a force of unarmed constables to enforce our local laws on littering, illegal parking, improper trash disposal, and dangerous driving; spent nearly a third of our total tax revenue on legal action to enforce our zoning and building codes; negotiated a $4 million renovation of our train station; created the village's first-ever website and newsletter to keep residents up to date; and completed a four-year, $40 million overhaul of our sewer and water pipes.

I understand that Mike's article is designed to persuade your readers that illegal immigration has destroyed Brewster Village, and by extension the nation, and that it's all the fault of the liberals. My point is that a strong argument against illegal immigration is easily made by using facts without the use of a fantastic straw man, in this case my village.

Spend a few bucks on fact checkers before you publish snide, derogatory articles about my community, my constituents, and my neighbors.

BILL BANKS, Trustee
Village of Brewster, N.Y.

Michael Brendan Dougherty replies: Not even my mother calls me Mike, Bill. And I've had Brewster's illegal-parking laws enforced on me. Good showing there. But on my Labor Day visit to Brewster, I saw shops with signs in foreign languages and men with whom I cannot have a conversation populating the pool hall, grocery store, and sidewalks. The website and newsletter, the renovations and sewer money, and all the bureaucratic happy talk of "unprec-edented efforts" have not reversed the process of transformation I described. How could they? I do not blame you personally or liberals alone despite your best guesses. Neither snide nor derogatory, my article was an elegy for a place I love.

KNOW THINE ENEMY

I found Andrew Bacevich's "The Islamic Way of War" (Sept. 11) a welcome antidote to the administration's calumny against its critics who are "appeasing" the "Islamic fascists." Bacevich cuts through the fog of Bush's war propaganda to see the real and counterable tactic of terrorism for what it really is (or is not).

"What many Westerners dismiss as 'terrorism,' whether directed against Israelis, Americans, or others in the West, ought to be seen as a panoply of techniques employed to undercut the apparent advantages of high-tech conventional forces," he writes. "The methods employed do include terrorism—violence targeting civilians for purposes of intimidation—but they also incorporate propaganda, subversion, popular agitation, economic warfare, and hit-and-run attacks on regular forces, either to induce an overreaction or to wear them down. The common theme of those techniques, none of which are new, is this: avoid the enemy's strengths; exploit enemy vulnerabilities."

To this list of techniques and methods Bacevich should have added one more. As Edward Cody and Molly Moore recently wrote in the *Washington Post*, "The [Hezbollah] fighters' Islamic faith and intense indoctrination reduced their fear of death ... giving them an advantage in close-quarters combat and in braving airstrikes to move munitions from post to post. Hezbollah leaders also enhanced fighters' willingness to risk death by establishing the Martyr's Institute, with an office in Tehran, that guarantees living stipends and education fees for the families of fighters who die on the front."

By beginning to identify the tactical and operational components of the Islamic Way of War—be they known techniques of asymmetrical warfare like terrorism or, as in Lebanon, a religiously inspired death-fearlessness—Bacevich can be credited for demystifying the enemy and revealing the threat for what it really is: radicalized Muslims adapting tactically to Western military occupation of Muslim land.

GREG GAMMON
via e-mail

SOUTH AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE

I know that you are directed to the North American public, but all the same I want to state my congeniality with your views in general and on Mideast issues in particular.

Once a week I check out your website and read the free articles you have available for any Internet user. You have become one of my favorite sources and sadly needed in these days when guys like Charles Krauthammer keep shouting their support for butchery that happens far away but ruins the lives of people surrounding even me. Yes, these matters affect the whole continent in a way hard to describe.

I wanted to declare my appreciation for your work and the pleasure I find in it as a higher version of Western stances.

ATTORE CASTELLO
Río Negro, Argentina

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[JUSTICE]

TORTURED LOGIC

Last week's East Room speech was a tale of two Bushes: the stalwart defender of the rule of law and the War President who claims privilege to suspend it.

The headline didn't surprise—suspected terrorists have been held in secret prisons outside the United States. Bush argued the necessity of this prerogative, complete with case studies. We would be less safe had he not … done what he's no longer doing.

But in a dizzying turn, prisoners for whom he authorized indefinite, often anonymous, detention without counsel or charges, will now "be presumed innocent."

Then he was back. Steel-spined again, Bush said of the detainee interrogations, "I cannot describe the specific methods used. … But I can say the procedures were tough, and they were safe and lawful and necessary."

Again a twist: "The United States does not torture. It's against our laws, and it's against our values. I have not authorized it—and I will not authorize it."

Unfortunately, this was more likely one of those "depends what the meaning of 'is' is" moments than a reversion to the rule of law. Recall that Bush DOJ memo ruling that pain "must be equivalent in intensity to … serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death" to qualify as torture.

Moreover, the Pentagon did little to affirm the president's disavowal by releasing a revised Army Field Manual prohibiting certain harsh interrogation techniques—a de facto admission that they were being employed. And will be still: under legislation drafted by the White House, the CIA will be permitted to keep using what Bush delicately called "an alternative set of procedures." His proposal also sanctions the use of "secret evidence" and contains no rules for testimony gained through torture—which theoretically shouldn't exist since the administration never authorized it, though retroactive immunity will be offered to anyone who engaged in it.

Bush wants it both ways. He understands Americans' fidelity to our ancient codes but deems his times outside normal experience and his executive judgment exceptional. Yet in this case, American moral authority, basic practicality—seasoned interrogators discount intelligence extracted under extreme duress—and popular consensus weigh against his will to rule above the law. Much as we fear the Khalid Sheik Mohammeds of the world, we also retain a healthy distrust of kings.

[IDEAS]

BEWARE: BLUE EYES

The pace of efforts to smear University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard's Stephen Walt has picked up, an indication that the pair's influence continues to grow. Six months ago, the two published a *London Review of Books* essay analyzing the amorphous but highly influential Israel lobby's grip on America's Mideast policy.

Judging by the frequency and vitriol of the attacks the piece has generated, it touched an extremely sensitive nerve. When the essay first appeared, Abe Foxman, on constant watch against those who question America's tie to Israel, counseled the lobby to keep its powder dry, hoping the piece would be quickly forgotten. But if Walt and Mearsheimer appeared to be gaining traction, said Foxman, "we will have to attack it with greater vigor."

Evidently they have been attracting enough attention to bring out the knives. Last month, when the two spoke at a D.C. forum, the *Washington Post* covered the event with a bizarre smear: the *Post*'s Dana Milbank insinuated that they were anti-Semites, describing them as "blue eyed with Germanic surnames," a racialist warning that a very large segment of Americans had best stay away from questioning the wisdom of their government's Mideast policies.

Now the *Wall Street Journal*'s op-ed page has run a piece by Bill Kristol, an advocate of war against all Muslims all the time, who tries to tie Walt and Mearsheimer in with Iran's Ahmadinejad and some Norwegian anti-Semite no one has ever heard of under the supposedly shared rubric of "anti-Judaism." According to Kristol, the two claimed that several Jews in the administration have special attachments in the Middle East due to "their religious belief." A more honest article might have acknowledged that the neocon ties to Israel that Walt and Mearsheimer allude

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to are of a different order altogether: two leading administration architects of the Iraq War, for instance, served as policy advisers for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and called for an end to making peace with the Palestinians, naturally. This kind of link has nothing to do with religious belief and everything to do with an unfortunate attachment to another country's nationalism.

It can't be fun to be the target of such smears, but they wouldn't be coming if the Israel lobby didn't sense its vulnerability to well informed and careful criticism. Walt and Mearsheimer have opened up a huge window, and people are taking a look. Later this month Mearsheimer, along with academic heavyweights Tony Judt and Rashid Khalidi, will debate the essay with three prominent opponents at New York's Cooper Union. It should be a historic event, and *TAC* will cover it.

[WAR]

MORE CAKEWALK?

Sources tell us the White House had ordered the Pentagon to ready plans for an attack on Iran in October—a date that would conveniently allow Bush to play at being a successful War President during the run-up to the November elections and perhaps even dress up in his flight suit again. Resistance to this scheme, we are told, comes from a surprising source: Donald Rumsfeld. The Pentagon chief is fine in principle with another self-defeating preventive war, but the timing is bad. Troops are overstretched, the chain of supply hasn't been replenished, the occupation force in Iraq is too vulnerable to the inevitable Shi'ite reprisals. Rummy, we hear, wants to put off the big attack until March. That's not soon enough to rally votes for the GOP this November but certainly in plenty of time to create more sworn enemies of the United States than already exist.

[IMMIGRATION]

NO BILL IS A GOOD BILL

In a setback for the Bush administration, House Republican leaders are signaling that they would rather pass no immigration bill than enact the Senate's guest-worker amnesty program. With the legislative calendar winding down and control of the House hanging in the balance, the leadership decided now would not be a good time to showcase GOP divisions—or alienate the party's base.

Congressman Tom Tancredo and his band of immigration reformers are to be commended for resisting the combined pressure of the Senate, the White House, and the Chamber of Commerce. The reformers' apparent success is a rare example of the government functioning the way the Founders intended, with the House representing the will of the people.

We can only hope that at some point the House will summon the courage to represent the people's will on other issues—Iraq comes to mind—as well.

[TAC]

WORST CASE

We're not persuaded that Las Vegas is going to "dry up and blow away" anytime soon. Nor have we beat our PCs into plowshares just yet. But James Howard Kunstler is the kind of thinker *TAC* most enjoys: innovative, ambitious, and untethered by partisan constraints. Figuring that conventional sloganeers have countless places to rehearse their talking points, we have always endeavored to be eclectic, challenging our readers to think past party lines and easy labels. In that spirit, we commend this essay by a pioneer of the New Urbanist movement, and though we hope he's not a prophet, traditionalists like Russell Kirk would sooner recognize the communitarian Kunstler than many of the current conservative pretenders. ■

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Patrick J. Buchanan

Losing the Will to Fight

Five years have elapsed since the war on terror began on 9/11. Yet even before nearly 3,000 were killed that day, there had been attacks by Islamic radicals on the World Trade Center, Khobar Towers, our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the USS *Cole*.

U.S. dead in those attacks was fewer than 100. And while the losses were tragic, they may be put in perspective if we realize that 85,000 people have been murdered in the U.S.A. since 9/11—not one in a terror attack.

Since 9/11, too, six million babies have been aborted in the United States, their places in our national home taken by an equal number of immigrants, legal and illegal, from the Third World. While 9/11 is seared in our memories until death, the America our children will inherit will be far more affected by what is happening in our abortuaries and on our borders. There the fate of the nation is being decided.

In the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that 9/11 produced, 3,000 Americans have died. Yet that is fewer than the number killed putting down the Filipino insurrection of 1899-1902.

By historical standards, the war on terror, or "World War III," "World War IV," or the "Long War" against "Islamofascism," has been a relatively bloodless affair, if not for the families who have lost loved ones. Over 600,000 died in our Civil War, 3,000 a week for four years.

In World War I, where Doughboys were in heavy combat in 1918 for eight months, we also lost 3,000 men a week. In World War II, we lost about 4,000 every two weeks. In Korea (37,000 dead in three years) and Vietnam (58,000 dead in seven years) we lost an average of nearly 10,000 a year.

In G.J. Meyer's *A World Undone: The History of the Great War 1914-1918*, the sentences on French losses in August 1914 alone read thus: "French casualties for the war's first month are believed to have totaled two hundred sixty thousand of whom seventy-five thousand were killed (twenty-seven thousand on August 22 alone). Among the dead were more than ten percent of France's regular and reserve officers."

France lost as many men every day in August 1914 as we have lost in three and a half years. On Aug. 22, 1914, France lost ten times as many dead as we have lost during the entire Iraq War.

Those who mock alleged French cravenness might reflect: France fought for four more years after that horrible August and lost 1.3 million men. Yet 60 percent of Americans are ready to pack it in in Iraq.

Why were Western men willing to die in such numbers rather than accept defeat in the early 20th century, but this generation is not? Not only have we no draft, anyone who called for raising taxes—the top rate was over 90 percent in World War II—would face political retribution.

The reasons are many.

Despite all the propaganda about Islamofascism and the coming caliphate, Americans do not see the war in Iraq as an existential crisis. They do not want to lose the war but are unwilling to pay a much higher price in blood and treasure to win it.

But something more fundamental has happened. Western man is no longer into dying for God and country. Western man, including many Americans, is into self-indulgence. Make love, not war. For we can see war now, up close, and view its awful consequences. And Western man recoils.

Europeans who butchered one another with abandon in the two bloodiest wars of the last century have had their fill. As they age and their numbers shrink, why should they go to war? Their fathers didn't want to die for Danzig. Why should they die for Kabul?

In the aftermath of 9/11, when President Bush ordered the U.S. military to remove the Taliban, who had given sanctuary to al-Qaeda and Osama, America was with him. When he identified Saddam as an integral part of an Axis of Evil hell-bent on America's destruction, the nation supported him.

Now America is not so sure.

Preventive war as the antidote to terror seems, now that Anbar province has become the world's newest base camp of terror, to have failed us. Democracy as the surest guarantee of U.S. security, now that Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Moqtada al-Sadr are rolling up election victories, seems a less persuasive proposition.

Like the French, British, and Russians, the Americans, last of the Western imperial powers, are looking homeward. The cost of empire is too high, and our willingness to pay the butcher's bill has diminished. ■

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[all's well that ends]

Liberating Ourselves

Failure to achieve the easy victory the hawks promised in Iraq doesn't mean that we must continue to lose.

By Paul W. Schroeder

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION originally sold the Iraq War to the public, Congress, and the world with two propaganda packages appealing respectively to fear and hope. One drew a horrifying picture of The Disastrous Consequences of Inaction in Iraq; the other depicted The Bright Promise of Victory in Iraq. Everyone remembers the absurd predictions, false promises, and outright lies these packages contained.

Today both have been totally discredited by events. The president, administration officials, and loyal supporters in the Congress and media spin the ongoing disaster in Iraq and looming one in Iran as signs of coming victory, but only true believers are convinced. With rebellion rising even among Republicans and control of Congress in jeopardy, the president is touring the country with a series of speeches designed to refurbish the old propaganda of fear. This newest package, The Disastrous Consequences of Failure in Iraq, seeks to terrify the public, mobilize the base, and vilify the opposition by portraying worse disasters sure to arise should cowardly, cut-and-run Democrats cause America to fail.

It should be easy for opponents of the war to refute this fear-mongering campaign with The Disastrous Consequences of Staying the Course. Though any such exertion comes hard to a divided party with its so-called moderates pulling in the opposite direction, the evidence showing the current campaign to be as illegitimate and self-deluding as the original pro-war campaign is overwhelming. But such a counterattack, though necessary, will not defeat the White House's strategy by itself and could even play into its hands.

The reasons are simple. Like other Bush-Cheney ploys, this one is not designed to educate or persuade rationally but to arouse and exploit patriotic emotion. Any counterargument, however solidly grounded in logic and evidence, will be politically and emotionally distasteful to many voters. Moreover, Americans want not merely to be warned of impending disaster but also to be told how it can be averted. To Republican true believers, "Stay the course" still represents the answer, simplistic and delusional though it is, while the majority skeptical about this answer demand something positive in its place.

The Republican electoral strategy thus rests on two pillars: on Bush's reported private quip during the 2004 campaign, "You can fool some of the people all the time, and those are the ones you have to concentrate on," while keeping the rest distracted, divided, and on the defensive; and on the opposition party's tearing itself apart trying to devise a positive alternative policy, with some leaders, including Hillary Clinton, still endorsing John Kerry's message in 2004, The Bright Promise of Letting Us Handle Iraq Better. This approach, now even more than in 2004, will divide the Democrats, confuse the public, and fail to rally supporters. Worse still, it would continue to obscure the central point and the first critical requirement for any solution in Iraq or progress toward one: that the current American venture has decisively failed, cannot be rescued or reformed, and must be abandoned.

This essay proposes an answer to this problem—not to the tactical electoral dilemma faced by the Democratic Party but to the policy dilemma faced by the country, an answer not offered by either party and almost certain to be denounced and repudiated by both. By frankly acknowledging failure in Iraq and acting quickly, decisively, and prudently on that recognition, the U.S. not only could avoid further disasters there but might also achieve a kind of success. Call it The Bright Promise of Accepting Failure in Iraq.

Be warned: the success to be described bears no resemblance to the glowing predictions made by neoconservative hawks before the war. Partici-

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pating in their game of false promises and self-delusion would mean violating the most critical requirement for any ultimate success for American policy in Iraq and elsewhere—that Americans get over their habit of spreading and believing comforting lies. The main weapon for opponents of this war and this policy must be ruthless honesty, and the great strength of that weapon now is that the war's proponents cannot use it. Therefore I begin by admitting, indeed insisting, that the light that could be kindled by accepting failure in Iraq resembles a flashlight with limited battery life rather than a locomotive headlight. But like a flashlight in a dark cave, it may be bright enough to show the way out.

It is idle to discuss the administration's refusal to recognize failure in Iraq and its insistence on the goal of victory as if this represented a serious military strategy or foreign-policy plan. "Victory" is not really defined and cannot be. Virtually all the concrete goals of the original Bright Promise of Victory in Iraq propaganda have already been tacitly abandoned and are no longer mentioned. The "success" talked about is not merely indefinable and unattainable but incoherent as a concept. The ends sought are self-contradictory and incompatible with the means used to attain them. All this could be demonstrated at length, accomplishing nothing but to further the administration's purposes of distraction and obfuscation. For the denial of failure and insistence on pursuing victory, insofar as it is a product of something more than pure fantasy, is not designed for military and foreign-policy purposes but for domestic politics, especially the 2006 elections. There the strategy could succeed by limiting the Republican losses just enough to keep control of both houses, avoid the congressional investigations the administration dreads, and delay the final collapse in Iraq until after 2008, when the presumably victorious Democrats could be blamed for it.

THE **DENIAL OF FAILURE** AND INSISTENCE ON **PURSUING VICTORY**, INSOFAR AS IT IS A PRODUCT OF SOMETHING MORE THAN **PURE FANTASY**, IS NOT DESIGNED FOR MILITARY AND FOREIGN-POLICY PURPOSES BUT FOR **DOMESTIC POLITICS**, ESPECIALLY THE **2006 ELECTIONS**.

The possibility of such a success rests on more than Rovian electoral wizardry. It exploits roots deep in the American heritage and character—the special difficulty many Americans have in coming to terms with limits in international politics, the feeling that admitting failure and wrong choices especially in wartime is un-American. Add to this the portrait the administration and a largely compliant press paint of what failure in Iraq would bring—civil war, chaos and radical Islam dominating the region, terrorism triumphant, Iran emboldened, Israel threatened, the oil supply imperiled or cut off, America humiliated, isolated, and impotent, and (the most dishonest but politically effective claim of all) the brave Americans killed or wounded in the fight for Iraqi freedom and American security betrayed. Against this lurid background Bush & Co. challenge the Democrats: if you are serious, show us your plan for meeting these dangers, solving these problems, and avoiding these disasters while getting us out of Iraq.

It is easy to show how absurd in logic and fact this demand is. It is like insisting that a man who shows you that your $100 bill is counterfeit owes you a real one, or—to use Molly Ivins's illustration—to argue that those who warned against hitting a hornet's nest with a stick must now, after the administration has done so and caused the hornets to swarm and attack everywhere, either propose a concrete plan for getting the hornets back into the nest or else join in efforts to kill them with the stick. Worst of all, the demand calls on others to solve the problem the Bush administration created while rejecting the fundamental condition for any solution, a recognition that wrong policy and failed leadership created the problem and that both must first be changed.

Yet outrageous as this tactic is, it may still work with many voters because making failure in war acceptable to Americans is like putting lipstick on a pig. That is the ungrateful task of this essay, and it requires a series of steps. First, I must show that the option of trying for success through acknowledging failure is the only rational chance to avoid further failure and worse disaster. Then that option must be made plausible and meaningful—plausible by seeing that this often happens in history as in ordinary life and meaningful through redefining and better understanding the nature of the contest and the meaning of victory or success.

The argument starts with two generalizations from history, obvious and familiar but often ignored. The first, that the worst disasters in history arise from a refusal to recognize and admit failure and deal with it, needs no proof. History is full of striking instances. Here is just one: the causes and factors that drove Germany deliberately to launch World War II and inflict unspeakable crimes on the world and on Germany itself were diverse and complicated, but one was

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basic—a refusal to admit that Germany had really lost World War I and must accept the consequences of defeat. Essentially, the German decision for war in 1939 was a decision to stay the course—to resume in a radical new form the effort of 1914-18 to make Germany dominant in Europe through military power. Similar instances from history could be cited almost ad infinitum.

The second generalization is also easy to document from history. Often—not always—a timely recognition of failure and the willingness to abandon or alter a wrong course leads in unexpected ways to success. Sometimes the change in course enables one to achieve the original aims by a different route; more often it leads to the discovery that the original goals were not that great or cost too much and that the country was actually better off with a different outcome—that sometimes one could win by losing.

American parochialism and the privileged, triumphant course of American history make this point hard for Americans to grasp. Yet in at least four major instances during the Cold War, the U.S. had to come to terms with failure, accept the consequences, and change course, sometimes by 180 degrees: Korea and the Korean War, China and the recognition of the Communist regime, Vietnam, and strategic parity with the USSR. In every case, accepting failure served to avoid further losses and potential disasters and led to an outcome different from what the U.S. was originally trying to achieve, but better. America would be worse off now had it won any of those contests in the way it originally tried to.

There is no mystery about why this happened to the United States as it has many times to other countries. A timely recognition of failure helps cut losses, stop rot, and cease wasting vital resources. It magnifies contradictions between goals and misfits between means and ends, helps us better understand the reasons for failure, and changes views of what outcomes may be acceptable. By admitting that one cannot solve the problem with the resources and methods one has, one may discover or create new, useful ones. Stop swimming upstream, and the current may carry you somewhere safe, if not to your original destination. Acknowledging that the problem is beyond your capacities may get you help—old or new allies and partners with common interests who cannot afford to let you entirely fail. A recognition that the way you are fighting the battle is making things worse may teach you that the struggle is not the kind you supposed it was and that there are better ways to fight it if necessary or to avoid it entirely—all simple lessons, but true, and these cases illustrate them.

The harder part is to show that this Bright Promise of Failure scenario can work in regard to Iraq and the Middle East and the struggle against terrorism. I offer no guarantees of success. Yogi Berra is right: it is always dangerous to prophesy, especially about the future. I also make no claim to expert knowledge of Middle East politics or access to intelligence. My expertise is as a historian, a bird that flies backward and knows where it has been better than where it is going. Oddly, however, my analysis and predictions on the Iraq War and the so-called Global War on Terror in articles published since 9/11, a good number in this journal, hold up better now than those of most of the supposed experts.

There is a reason for this. The main intellectual defect in current American foreign policy is the lack of any sense of history, particularly as the British historian Lewis B. Namier defined it: a trained intuitive sense of the way things do not happen. (How they actually happen depends on the evidence.) America's leaders and their advisers, including some so-called historians and political scientists, not only are ignorant of history and insensitive to it, they despise and repudiate it. Their favorite epithet for opponents is to accuse them of having a pre-9/11 mentality, of believing that history before September 2001 still tells us something.

Neither having a sense of history nor wanting one, their calculations and policies are thoroughly infected with that disease fatal for good policy, for which a sense of history is the best prophylactic and cure—utopianism. It is the blind optimism, the utopianism of this administration, along with its dishonesty, that accounts for its record of repeated promises and calculations that anyone with a sound historical sense could tell were not going to work. Their particular brand of utopianism, moreover, combines its two worst forms—a radical utopianism that believes that the evils to be fought are simple, readily identified, and easily capable of being rooted out and replaced with good, and the utopianism of Machtpolitik, the belief that with enough power resolutely applied one can do anything.

ONE **REQUIREMENT FOR REAPING ANY PROFIT** FROM ACCEPTING FAILURE IN IRAQ IS A **CLEAR ANTI-UTOPIAN SENSE** OF HISTORY.

One requirement for reaping any profit from accepting failure in Iraq, then, is a clear anti-utopian sense of history, a willingness to recognize and respect limits and reject self-delusion—something any reasonably educated, sensible person can develop. It also helps if we avoid some natural but

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erroneous assumptions about what accepting failure in foreign policy involves. It is not simply a first preliminary step, a matter of seeing that you are in a hole and should stop digging. It involves a rigorous, active search for the deeper causes of failure and thus becomes a strategic maneuver, a way of seeking and creating conditions needed for climbing out of the hole.

Another natural assumption would be that harvesting success from failure requires a clear policy delineating the principles and steps that will lead from failure to success. Most Americans and a majority of observers worldwide recognize that staying the course to victory in Iraq is not a real policy and that recent proposals by neoconservatives to up the ante by attacking Syria and/or Iran and having the president declare that America is in World War III are certifiably insane. But thoughtful persons looking for a way out are confronted with at least four alternative lines of policy, each strongly advocated and all at least sane and intellectually defensible. These approaches can be broadly characterized as semi-isolationist/libertarian, realist balance-of-power, leftist-reformist, and internationalist or (misleadingly) Wilsonian. The differences between them are not trivial, and the debate over which is best is not inappropriate—except at this time when the critical issue is whether the country will face the fact of decisive failure in Iraq at all. On that score their differences make no real difference; advocates of all four of these approaches today agree on rejecting the current course and taking some initial steps for recovery and ultimate success. Disputes over the merits of these approaches at this point only confuse the public and help the administration and its neocon prophets to propose their nostrums as no-nonsense remedies.

Even more necessary than this "first things first" basis for consensus among opponents of the war is a better understanding of the nature of the broad global contest the U.S. is now engaged in and the definition of success in it. Nothing in this discussion so far suggests a good slogan for a bumper sticker or a banner in an antiwar demonstration. That is as it should be; international politics is too complicated for slogans, and the slogans of the simplifiers in the administration have contributed to the terrible mess they have made. But for understanding the nature of the contest, one slogan would fit: "It's Not a War, Stupid!"

BUSH & CO. INSIST THAT **ALL THEIR CAMPAIGNS**—AGAINST AL-QAEDA, THE TALIBAN, SADDAM HUSSEIN, THE INSURGENCY IN IRAQ, HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH, AND POTENTIALLY AGAINST SYRIA AND IRAN—**ARE LITERALLY WARS** AND ALL ARE **AGAINST THE SAME GENERIC FOE, TERRORISM**.

Words are defenseless things. Any kind of struggle can be called a war—on drugs, poverty, crime, illiteracy—so long as one does not take the metaphor literally and wage the contest as if it really were a war. An NFL coach who urges his players to go to war with the opposing team does not expect them to start shooting. Yet Bush & Co. insist that all their campaigns—against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Saddam Hussein's regime, the insurgency and sectarian violence in Iraq, Hamas and Hezbollah, terrorism in general, and potentially against Syria and Iran—are literally wars and all are against the same generic foe, terrorism; that America is under military attack; and that these enemies, all lumped together, must be fought primarily by military means.

This incessant beating of the war drum is enormously important. It has served as the main propaganda weapon for Republicans at the polls; the rationale for every expansion of executive authority now leading the country toward a constitutional crisis; the justification for every violation of international law; the cover for all the abuses, atrocities, and instances of collateral damage in civilian casualties and destruction attendant on military action; the excuse for massive expenditure, waste, and corruption; and the main weapon used to silence critics, vilify opponents, and cover up illegality, fraud, and incompetence in government. The insistence that America is at war, combined with a persistent refusal to pay for it or require sacrifices of most Americans, has contributed to a massive distortion of public spending, huge and growing deficits of every kind, a dangerous militarization of American thought and society, and the destruction of any sense of responsibility in both the government and the public.

Worst of all, the propaganda campaign has worked and is still working politically. Though a majority of Americans polled believe the wars on terror and in Iraq are not going well and now consider the war in Iraq a mistake or at least not worth its costs, few Americans, including opponents of the war in Iraq and Bush's general policy, doubt that 9/11 put America in a state of war, and most still believe that this war must be prosecuted and ended successfully, even if they cannot exactly define victory.

This belief that the United States is now genuinely in a state of war against terrorism, still the president's greatest

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electoral asset, represents at best massive misconception and confusion. The United States, along with many other major governments and advanced, orderly societies, is engaged in a struggle to defend the rule of law, order, and security at home and to sustain a decent international system abroad against irregular attacks and crimes by individuals, groups, and factions within various countries. This is therefore essentially a struggle of governments against a diverse assortment of criminal anti-government groups. Those who oppose terrorism and terrorist groups have a prime interest in promoting this view and in keeping as many governments as possible united and engaged in the struggle against terrorists as a legal international campaign against criminal enemies of all regular states and governments.

Proclaiming this a war and waging the struggle primarily by military means works concretely against this purpose and helps terrorists. The fact that terrorist leaders and groups may have declared war on the United States and other countries and carried out attacks against them makes no difference. They have a major interest in making this a war. It legitimizes them, ennobles their cause and their actions in the eyes of followers and sympathizers, gives them international stature, and lures opponents into the kinds of overreactions that delegitimize them, alienate their natural allies and the neutrals, and split the anti-terrorist governmental front.

A little history to illustrate: throughout the 19th century, conservative regimes in Europe, especially Austria and Russia, waged a mortal struggle against revolutionary groups and organizations. They hated and feared these enemies as much as Americans do terrorists today, and given the weakness of these regimes and the genuine threat revolution posed to them they had far better reason to do so. Their efforts to suppress revolution, often counterproductive and finally ending in failure, included the use of their armies at various times against revolutions at home or in allied regimes abroad. But they never made the blunder of justifying their repressive actions at home and abroad by saying they were at war with the revolutionaries. They knew that this would elevate the status of their foes, alienate friends and neutrals, and negate the strongest card in their hands—their claim to be enforcing law and defending civilization against international criminals.

This is not a matter of diplomatic-legal terminology or an academic distinction. The American insistence on calling its campaign against particular terrorists a Global War on Terror has gratuitously given its enemies an important victory in a struggle in which politics, image and propaganda are more than half the battle. The decision to attack Iraq, a state clearly no threat to the United States, multiplied that propaganda victory many times over, and the impression of America it created—that of a country ruthless and powerful in military conquest but incompetent and impotent in civic follow-up—has multiplied it again. Americans, led by their government, seem incapable of understanding that this worldwide contest is not a shootout at the OK Corral but judo. The object is not to eliminate the opponent but to unbalance and overthrow him, using his own offensive lunges to do so. Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, the Iraqi insurgents, even Saddam himself understood that, with the result that America, though incomparably stronger, has been thrown off balance far more than they.

This understanding of the contest as a long-term political, legal struggle to uphold the rule of law rather than a war, and judo rather than a gunfight, must also change the American definition of success. The administration, with most of the media and many voters in tow, has consistently defined victory in terms of missions supposedly accomplished, positive gains allegedly achieved. Time and again it has hailed particular triumphs as breakthroughs and turning points, proof that the U.S. is on the road to victory—military victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, installation of "friendly" regimes, introduction of "democratic" institutions and reforms, capture or killing of particular enemies, defeat of certain insurgent forces or risings, conduct of elections, adoption of constitutions, formation of a "permanent", "sovereign" government in Iraq, a roadmap for peace in Palestine, the death of Yasser Arafat and democratic elections in Palestine—only to have every glorious victory quickly turn to ashes in the mouths of the administration and its followers.

AMERICANS, LED BY THEIR GOVERNMENT, SEEM **INCAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING** THAT THIS WORLDWIDE CONTEST IS **NOT A SHOOTOUT AT THE OK CORRAL BUT JUDO**. THE OBJECT IS NOT TO ELIMINATE THE OPPONENT BUT TO **UNBALANCE AND OVERTHROW HIM**.

Why? Lack of planning, incompetence, poor intelligence, insufficient manpower, bad decisions, inexperience, unfamiliarity with an alien environment? Yes, all these and more, but the deeper reason for failure is a wrong concept of victory. In this contest, as in the 19th-century contest of legitimate regimes against revolution, victory cannot mean crushing the evil and establishing the reign of Freedom and Democracy throughout the world by glorious victories on the battlefield or elsewhere, but (in the words of Austria's

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Prince Metternich) outliving the evil. That is not compromise or surrender. It means ensuring that one's own values, institutions, and way of life survive and ultimately thrive while those who would overthrow them are gradually marginalized and ultimately die out. That is the only kind of victory in this contest America can achieve or should aspire to.

History does not repeat itself, but it does show repetitive patterns. In looking for clues from previous instances where Americans harvested success from acknowledged failure—the Korean War, Vietnam, recognition of Communist China, and accepting strategic parity with the Soviet Union—it makes sense to start with the assumptions behind the original policies that ultimately failed and had to be abandoned. In all four instances American policy rested initially on certain common assumptions: the threat being confronted was uniquely grave; failure to meet and defeat it now would have a domino effect, leading to its becoming steadily worse and potentially unstoppable; the danger could not be met by normal international politics but required either the direct application of military force or the possession of clear military superiority and willingness to use it as a deterrent; and finally, the U.S., if it acted with the necessary resolve, would bring most of the rest of the world into line with its action or at least deter others from opposing it, that the tide of history threatening to turn against America would thus be turned back in its favor, and that the defeat of this particular enemy on this particular front would decisively promote the ultimate victory of the good cause.

These assumptions were not obviously irrational, stupid, or cover for a hidden agenda. The North Korean invasion, regardless of its origins out of an emergent Korean civil war rather than a worldwide Communist offensive against the free world, was a serious military attack on an American ally and a threat to the American position in East Asia that needed to be met with force. Much of Southeast Asia did seem ripe for Communist takeover from Vietnam. The regime of Mao Zedong was one of the most revolutionary and ruthless in history. The USSR was a superpower with a tyrannical regime, oppressive empire, formidable military, and the nuclear power to destroy the world.

Yet after a half-century or less, these original assumptions can be seen and acknowledged as having been wrong—not dead wrong, wholly without foundation or excuse, but flawed, exaggerated, one-sided, and hence when used as the basis for policy destined to make things worse rather than better.

That recognition did not come automatically nor was it a precondition and cause of the reversal of policy. In all four instances what came first was a recognition that the task assigned America by its current policy—uniting Korea under American control, defeating the Viet Cong and preserving an independent anti-Communist pro-American South Vietnam, defending Taiwan as the legitimate government of mainland China, and denying the Soviet Union its status as a strategic equal with equivalent military power—was not feasible, that the goal was not attainable at any acceptable risk and cost. Only then did the majority of decision-makers and the general public begin seriously to question the assumptions on which the strategy of the impossible rested. Yet this recognition of failure and the resultant gradual changes in policy inevitably entailed and produced a change in thinking as well as in strategy and tactics—the kind of turnaround needed in America now.

In each instance, the U.S. gave up unachievable goals and settled for temporary, provisional, managerial solutions, truces, or standoffs; accepted or deliberately sought multilateral, negotiated outcomes based on compromise; and sometimes made major concessions to its opponents to reach them.

These were more than mere tactical moves forced by hostile pressure. They simultaneously produced and were accompanied by a change in thinking and approach. The U.S. government, in practice if not in overt proclamation or ideology, ceased viewing each particular danger primarily in global terms as part of an overarching worldwide threat and instead aimed to handle each as a local, limited challenge, isolating it where possible from the putative global contest, even where and when Americans believed that the global contest was real and serious. This enabled it consciously to induce divisions among its opponents and exploit these.

At the same time this shift enabled the U.S. to control and reduce its commitments to its subordinate allies, persuading or forcing them to make compromises, share or assume burdens and risks, and give up their particular goals in order to retain general American support. The South Korean regime had to abandon its goal of unifying Korea through American arms. Taiwan had to accept American recognition of its worst and most threatening foe as the legitimate government of China and ultimately of Taiwan itself. The South Vietnamese regime had to accept destruction. West Germany had to give up any prospect of German unification for the foreseeable future. In a sense, America made others pay the main price for the success it achieved by accepting failure.

THE **U.S. CEASED VIEWING** EACH PARTICULAR DANGER IN **GLOBAL TERMS** AND INSTEAD AIMED TO HANDLE EACH AS A **LOCAL, LIMITED CHALLENGE**.

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Why did this work? Because once Americans woke up to the impossible character of their aims and the flaws in their basic assumptions, they cleverly adjusted themselves to reality and managed their problems with skill and moderation? Not mainly. It would do little to correct the radical utopianism of the Bush administration and its followers to encourage Americans to think that even if they cannot win simply by being militarily all-powerful, they can achieve whatever they want through clever and forceful diplomacy. The U.S. succeeded for a number of reasons that had little to do with its own power and skill and far more with favorable international conditions not under American control.

Our main opponents, though formidable and impossible to destroy or defeat by military force, were neither as powerful nor as stable internally nor as aggressive and revolutionary in their foreign-policy aims nor as incapable of compromise and coexistence as we supposed. In other words, normal international politics could work with them. Besides that, these opponents were less united than we imagined, more riven by internal rivalries and disputes they had to manage and the U.S. could exploit. In contrast, the U.S. had genuine partners rather than satellites, allies who were ready to help promote compromise solutions where they could not support the American quest for victory. As for our client states and those we defended, in all these cases save that of South Vietnam, they were not merely willing under pressure to accept the sacrifice of particular aims for general peace but in certain instances actually welcomed and co-operated with these aims (e.g., West Germany's promotion of détente and the Helsinki Accords in the 1970s and Japan's welcoming of the recognition of China). It was also important that on both sides governments were able and willing to control and marginalize their own extremists pushing for aggressive measures to achieve decisive victory over the enemy.

EVERYONE NOW RECOGNIZES—THOUGH **BUSH WILL NEVER ADMIT IT**—THAT THE INSURGENTS AND **RESISTERS TO THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION** IN IRAQ ARE VERY MUCH **DIVIDED AND OFTEN HOSTILE** TOWARD EACH OTHER.

Most important, however, is the fact that this different approach changed the arena and rules of the contest from one that the U.S. could not win at any acceptable cost, and that its allies and friends did not want to fight, into one that the U.S. and its side of the world were far better suited to wage: a contest over what kind of government, society, economy, and politics was best at peaceful coexistence.

Critics insist that this is all old history, rendered obsolete by 9/11. What the U.S. now faces is a wholly different situation and array of foes—rogue regimes like Iran and North Korea, terrorist organizations with global reach immune to sanctions or pressure because they have no address or permanent interests to defend, the possibility of WMD being used by fanatical ideologues with purely destructive aims and suicidal followers deterred by no moral restraints or civilized codes. To talk of diplomatic strategies for dealing with these is the worst kind of self-delusion.

Most astonishing about this ubiquitous response is not the lack of historical sense it reveals but the absence of memory. Again allowing for changed circumstances, these arguments were used time and again, at even greater volume and with better reason, to argue the futility of dealing with the North Koreans, the Chinese, the Soviets, and the Vietnamese except by force. The extremist hawks were wrong then and they are wrong now. The global terrorist threat is no more real now than the global Communist threat was then. Terrorism is mostly concentrated on particular local and regional aims and directed against particular local enemies. The identifiable terrorist groups and organizations are fragmented and divided by serious fault lines and disagreements. Iran is hostile and verbally belligerent but tactically and strategically more concerned with its defense against the United States and Israel and its influence in the Shi'ite world than with holy war against infidels. Hamas and Hezbollah have particular goals; so does Syria. Everyone now recognizes—though Bush will never admit it—that the insurgents and resisters to the American occupation in Iraq are very much divided and often hostile toward each other. The point is not that they are harmless or should be ignored or pampered but that using the tactics of the gunfight against them only drives them together and increases their number, while combating them with judo would divide them and decrease their threat.

Above all, recognizing failure in Iraq means seeing not simply that the U.S. has not succeeded to this point but that it cannot ever succeed in what it set out to do by this war—supplant the regime of Saddam Hussein with a stable, democratic, friendly Iraq—because the strategy was fundamentally flawed, the execution worse, and the consequences by now such that anything American occupiers do, however well-intentioned, must make things worse. The longer America stays, the more it fuels the insurgency, the latent and growing civil

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war, the sectarian divisions, and the pervasive degradation of Iraq's civil society.

As to concrete steps for turning this situation around, I offer no blueprint. Few blueprints in history are ever followed or work when they are. The rule in statecraft and warfare is improvisation guided by a general goal. In this case the general goal, to turn accepting current failure into eventual success, requires more than simply an exit strategy. Certainly one is necessary and overdue, but it should be more than a way of getting Americans out of harm's way. Combined with other measures of strategic retreat, it can be a measure of active defense and offense, like apparently yielding to the opponent's lunge in order to throw him off balance for a countermove.

An even better way to understand America's task is to use a historical model full of relevance and potent lessons but so politically incorrect that neither party could embrace it and that those who would, chiefly radicals on the Left, would misuse it: to see the new policy as an attempt at successful disimperialism. Regardless of whether one considers the war in Iraq as continuing a longstanding American imperialist tradition or (as I do) a departure from America's main Cold War tradition, two conclusions are inescapable.

First, the Iraq War originated in an attempt at American informal empire in the Middle East and remains mired in it. When one powerful country invades and conquers a small, weak country thousands of miles away with a very different culture, language, history, religion, and society in order to replace its regime permanently with one resembling the occupier's own, change its economic structure, control its most important resource, and use it to dominate and change other regimes in the region, that is classic, unalloyed imperialism. To refuse to admit this and cover it up with transparent dodges of liberation, democratization, self-defense, and Global War on Terror is to indulge still further in the comforting lies that are ruining America's capacity for world leadership and even for democratic self-governance.

POLITICAL SCIENTISTS AND HISTORIANS HAVE LONG KNOWN THAT **IMMATURE DEMOCRACIES** ARE MORE **UNSTABLE, AGGRESSIVE, AND WAR-PRONE** THAN TRADITIONAL REGIMES.

Second, that imperialist effort has failed disastrously, America's so-called unipolar moment is past, rotten before it was ripe, and the task before it now is disimperialism. Like Britain and France after World War II and the USSR after 1989, the goal has to be not merely to give up an untenable imperialist position but to do so in such a way as to protect vital interests, maintain a necessary position of leadership, and lay a new basis for eventual useful relations with the countries of the former or would-be empire.

That is bound to be a distasteful, delicate, and sometimes humiliating task, with many apparent setbacks and only long-range payoffs. But as history shows, it can be done, and there are at least some fairly concrete ways to approach it. The trick is making the decision to abandon the imperial venture clear and convincing to one's own people and the rest of the world (including opponents), while at the same time showing that this is a strategic decision dictated by good sense and done from strength, not the product of weakness, despair, or disorientation.

A good place to start is with the public renunciation of failed, misconceived, counterproductive policies. There are three obvious candidates, favorites of Bush and the neoconservatives.

The first is the administration's much trumpeted goal of transforming the Middle East through democratization, something impossible from outside, especially through military intervention and hostile pressure by the perceived main enemy of the region, and destabilizing and dangerous even where apparently successful. Political scientists and historians have long known that immature democracies are more unstable, aggressive, and war-prone than traditional regimes. Promoting democracy in Iraq has led to civil war and the nascent collapse of the country and in Palestine and Lebanon to greater power for radicals and terrorist groups.

The second is democratization's twin —promoting regime change, particularly by military force or support for dissidents. Where this fails, as it usually does —witness Cuba—it discredits both the U.S. and the dissidents; where it succeeds, as in Afghanistan, it generally promotes failed states and rule by warlords, militias, and rival factions. Both outcomes contradict the main U.S. interest in working with regular, stable governments against terrorism and violence.

The third is promoting Western values in the Arab-Muslim worlds by public diplomacy, in particular attempts to sell the American way of life and convince others that Americans are truly friends and protectors of Islam and can serve as honest brokers. This whole project only serves to make the U.S. look ridiculous and discredit the moderates in Islam who would like to adapt to modernity, thus aiding the radicals. What will it take to convince many

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Americans that much of the world currently hates and fears the U.S. not because of its values but because of its policies and actions and that the only way to change that perception is to change those?

This part is fairly easy, a matter of discarding useless baggage. The next, announcing a genuine change in policy in convincing fashion without making it appear an act of desperation, is trickier. But there are ways to approach it. One is to announce a clear general goal not subject to conditions or compromises—in this case, the entire removal of American armed forces from Iraq in the near future and a comprehensive review with all the host countries of the status of American forces and bases throughout the region with an eye to reducing them—accompanied by an offer to work out the timing of these moves with the other parties concerned, including the current Iraqi government and any successor ones. The purpose of this, of course, is to change the American military presence from being publicly an albatross around the necks of these governments and privately a crutch they lean on to something that, if they want it, they need to seek, compete for, and acknowledge.

Along with this open announcement of a change in course needs to go some striking symbolic action to make the announcement credible. Here is an obvious candidate: publicly scrap the plans for the billion-dollar-plus American Embassy/fortress-city in the heart of Baghdad and commit America unconditionally to no military bases, bastions, stationing agreements, or other ways of staying on militarily in Iraq.

An even better political action would be for the U.S. government to call now for an international conference under other auspices than our own to discuss how to deal with the now inevitable civil war in Iraq and the possible breakup of the state. The participants would have to include all Iraq's neighbors, including Iran, and all vitally interested outsiders besides the United States. The point would not be to achieve concrete results, which is unlikely; even getting such a conference convened would be a long shot. Instead, like these other moves, the effort would serve to prove that the U.S. genuinely recognizes the problems its intervention helped cause, wants to share the burden of meeting them with others, and is not trying to control the outcome unilaterally.

There are other ways in which the U.S. could, if it tried, turn a strategic retreat into pursuit of a different kind of victory by robbing enemies of their main pretexts for hostile propaganda and actions, dividing them among themselves, and helping those who have common interests with America to co-operate with or at least not oppose it. The common interests are obvious—opposition to terrorism, need for stability, equal access to the oil and gas of the region, worry about the ripple effects of civil war and sectarian violence—and the potential divisions and rivalries to take advantage of are equally so.

SCRAP THE PLANS FOR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY/FORTRESS-CITY IN THE HEART OF BAGHDAD AND **COMMIT AMERICA** UNCONDITIONALLY TO **NO MILITARY BASES**.

I do not believe that the strategy urged here will be adopted—certainly not by the current administration, probably not by any successor or any future electorate. The reason is not that such a policy would not work. As I have argued, on objective historical and practical grounds it would stand a reasonable chance. Nor is it that present American political conditions, habits, and institutions make it unthinkable. Though there is much more to this argument, it is just possible that crushing defeats for the Republicans in 2006 plus the accumulation of further bad news from the Middle East might deter the administration from more mad gambles to cover existing losses and might embolden the Democrats and the public to try something really different.

The insuperable, structural obstacle to a serious pursuit of success in the Middle East through accepting failure in Iraq, the elephant in the room that I have carefully avoided mentioning hitherto, is Israel. More precisely, it is not Israel itself or its actions, but the fact that the United States has deliberately forfeited control over its policy toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflicts that form one critical aspect of the Middle East imbroglio. While the U.S. could conceivably change its policy and aims in regard to all its other vital aspects—Iraq, Iran, oil, regional security, even terrorism—I see no possibility that any party, administration, or American public will take the steps needed to regain that essential control.

Obviously this is not a subject that can be opened up, much less discussed here. I mention it solely in the interests of candor and to explain why this guardedly optimistic essay ends as a Cassandra cry. Perhaps better, it calls to mind Bismarck's parting words to the third Turkish delegate to the Congress of Berlin in 1878, a Congress that rescued the Ottoman Empire from part of its losses in revolts, crises, and wars in 1875-1878: "This is your last chance—and if I know you, you will not take it." ■

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GOP Safety Valve

Can the Republicans' advantage on national security overcome their weakness on Iraq?

By W. James Antle III

STANDING IN THE EAST ROOM nearly five years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks before an audience that included some of the victims' family members, President Bush might have been expected to deliver the usual remarks about Iraq. Instead he claimed specific national-security gains from tough terror-suspect interrogation policies and called on Congress to give his administration the authority to try al-Qaeda operatives like Khalid Sheik Mohammed by military tribunal.

The next day in Atlanta, Bush continued to concentrate on tools for prosecuting the war on terror. He called for "additional authority" to continue the no-warrant national surveillance program, which he described as essential to stopping "terrorists who want to harm America."

Bush's change in focus just weeks before the congressional elections is no accident. Voters make a distinction between the war in Iraq and protecting the U.S. homeland from terrorism. They have turned sharply against the former but still trust Bush and the Republicans on the latter. This split was already apparent by 2004. Exit polls showed Bush winning 86 percent of those who voted on the issue of terrorism while Democrat John Kerry took 73 percent of voters who cast their ballots based on Iraq.

A late August *USA Today*/Gallup poll shows the bifurcation has continued. The president gets his highest marks on terrorism, where 55 percent approve of his performance, and his lowest on Iraq, where 61 percent disapprove. These numbers suggest strategic opportunities for both parties. Republicans can mitigate the fallout from Iraq by playing to their strengths on national security more generally. But a majority now agrees with the Democrats that Iraq is not an integral part of the war on terror, opening the door for them to be an antiwar party without compromising their anti-terrorism commitment.

Yet candidates throughout the country are discovering that this delicate balance—dovish on Iraq, hawkish on terror—is easier to suggest than achieve. Consider Ned Lamont. He upset pro-war Sen. Joe Lieberman in Connecticut's Democratic primary. But now Lieberman is running as an independent and is proving difficult to finish off. No general-election poll has shown Lamont faring better than a tie and most find him trailing the incumbent.

It's not because Connecticut's broader electorate disagrees with Democratic primary voters on Iraq. Polls have shown over 70 percent disapproving of the war, with particularly strong antiwar margins among independents. But 55 percent say they trust Lieberman more than Lamont on terrorism.

"People may disagree with Lieberman on the war, but they have a comfort level with him on security," says one polling expert. Lieberman has not been reluctant to press this advantage. Days after the foiled London terror plot, the senator charged that the success of Lamont's antiwar views would "be taken as a tremendous victory by the same people who wanted to blow up these planes."

In response, Lamont has settled on an obvious strategy—trying to whittle away his opponent's national-security advantages by arguing that the Iraq War distracted America from the campaign against al-Qaeda. Appearing on "Fox News Sunday," he noted that the aborted terror attempt "originated in Pakistan, goes through London, and here we have 132,000 of our bravest troops in the middle of a civil war in Iraq." Instead of indicating a lack of resolve against terrorism, Lamont argued that his primary victory "showed … a lot of people in Connecticut think the invasion of Iraq has nothing to do with our War on Terror."

Perhaps recognizing that this line of argument has potential, many war supporters are bypassing Iraq in their efforts to impugn the terror-fighting credentials of their opponents. In Ohio, Republican Sen. Mike DeWine is locked in a close race against Democratic Congressman Sherrod Brown. The two candidates disagree on Iraq, but DeWine has zeroed in on other aspects of his opponent's record.

In July, DeWine launched a television advertising campaign alleging that Brown voted to "slash" intelligence funding "more than a dozen times" during the 1990s. Against the backdrop of a smoldering World Trade Center, the ad accuses the Democrat of "weakening America's security."

Brown fired back with his own commercial, emphasizing his support for tighter port security and the death

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penalty for terrorists. "It's sad," the response ad's narrator intones. "Mike DeWine exploiting images of 9/11 to smear Sherrod Brown."

DeWine's strategy seems straight out of Dick Morris's playbook. Writing in the *New York Post*, the veteran political strategist and former Clinton adviser urged the GOP to apply his triangulation tactics to terror. "Bush and the Republicans need to stop alienating voters by arguing that Iraq is an indispensable front in the War on Terror," Morris wrote. "They should center their fall campaign to keep control of Congress on the national-security issue *sans* Iraq."

There's an apparent flaw in Morris's advice, however. Triangulation worked for Bill Clinton because on several key issues he was to the right of congressional Democrats and to the left of the Republicans. The Bush administration does not represent the vital center that wishes to pursue a vigorous war on terrorism while being skeptical of Iraq. Instead Bush and the GOP advocate the more extreme position Morris counsels them to avoid.

A handful of Republicans seem willing to try a little triangulation by claiming that center. In his long-shot Senate race against socialist Congressman Bernie Sanders, Vermont GOP candidate Richard Tarrant is waging a DeWine-like ad campaign focusing on Sanders's votes against intelligence funding. But there is one key difference: Tarrant actually favors withdrawal from Iraq.

In an interview with Vermont Public Radio last year, Tarrant resembled another Green Mountain State Republican, the late Sen. George Aiken, in his desire to declare victory and leave. "I think we need to get out fairly rapidly," he said. "I don't advocate cutting and running. But I think we're successful. We have done some good things. We got rid of a terrible dictator."

In Pennsylvania, Republican Congressman Michael Fitzpatrick faces a tough challenge from Democrat Patrick Murphy, an Iraq War veteran and Bronze Star winner. Murphy has a proposal to redeploy U.S. troops from Iraq within 12 months. Fitzpatrick decided to place himself in the center between his opponent and the White House.

"Congressman Fitzpatrick says NO to both extremes," a mid-August mailing from the incumbent read. "No to President Bush's 'stay the course' strategy … and no to Patrick Murphy's 'cut and run' approach." Fitzpatrick's move suggests that, *pace* Morris, the most effective way to triangulate might be to position Bush opposite the antiwar Left.

Another, more prominent Pennsylvania Republican has decided to defend ground on Iraq that even Bush has conceded. In June, Sen. Rick Santorum joined House Intelligence Committee Chairman Peter Hoekstra in proclaiming that the discovery of 500 degraded chemical munitions in Iraq since 2003 vindicated the administration's pre-war claims about weapons of mass destruction. "This is an incredibly—in my mind—significant finding," the senator told Fox News.

But even Santorum, in the fight of his life against Democrat Bob Casey Jr., has sought to fit his support for the war into the context of a fight against Islamic terrorism. Consider Santorum's remarks in a debate with Casey on "Meet the Press": "We need to go out there and fight this war on Islamic fascism. Not just, as my opponent likes to focus on, just the war in Iraq." Santorum referred to Iraq as "simply a front" in the larger war on terror, less important than "principal stoker" Iran.

If Santorum's parrying highlights the Republican problems on the war—out of Iraq, into Iran doesn't sound like an inspiring slogan—Democrats have had similar difficulties overcoming the public's reluctance to trust them on national security. The Democratic Party's reputation of being weak on defense has followed them from the Cold War to the war on terror. For years, the party was seen as hopelessly crippled by "Vietnam syndrome." Older voters remember liberal Democrats advocating military-budget cuts and nuclear freeze.

One tactic Democrats have adopted to counteract their soft image is to rely on military veterans to make the case against Iraq for them. The emergence of hawkish Pennsylvania Congressman John Murtha as an antiwar voice was a major coup. Virginia Senate candidate James Webb—who, as his first ad reminds us, served as President Reagan's Navy secretary—is another Democratic veteran well positioned to overcome his party's national-security baggage.

Yet military service isn't sufficient to save Democrats who are seen as liberal on national security. Ask Georgia Democrat Max Cleland, a Vietnam veteran and triple amputee who was defeated in 2002 due in part to Republican ads—complete with images of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden—targeting him for his votes concerning the Department of Homeland Security.

This may explain why Bush has decided to come out with new proposals on wiretapping and military tribunals right before the elections. "This is a pretty transparent attempt at offering up bait to liberal Democrats to get in his way," Democratic consultant Jim Jordan told the *Los Angeles Times*.

If Democrats can avoid taking the bait—or better yet, come up with credible alternatives to Bush policy—2006 could be their year. Down in the polls in almost every other category, toughness on terror is the Republicans' last major source of strength. If the GOP loses that, it's hard to see how any amount of triangulation can save them. ■

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Cartoon Castro

The reality of the Cuban dictator bears little resemblance to his admirers' fantasies.

By Peter Hitchens

IN SOME COUNTRIES the visitor wishes for a mighty hand to reach down from the clouds and take away the tyranny and squalor he sees around him. Cuba is one such place. Havana is one of the loveliest cities on the planet, or would be if it had not been turned into the mother of all shanty towns by decades of deliberate neglect.

And the Cuban people seem to have a special talent for the arts of life, ignoring as far as they can the restrictions and the privations of a mad, dogmatic regime that sometimes expropriates ice-cream stands and sometimes launches schemes to feed the poor on rodents. It also keeps them under close observation through squads of inquisitive busybodies on every block. Nowhere on earth is speech less free or the home less private, except possibly North Korea. Nobody would wish their fate upon them.

I wonder what the generally heedless western tourists, for whom Cuba is now a fashionable destination, would do if they were expelled from their privileged foreigners' beach reservations, deprived of their special tourist banknotes, and set loose with ordinary Cuban money and ration cards to forage for food and shelter in the collapsing, ill-smelling, intrusively-watched, fly-infested streets of central Havana.

I doubt if they would accept the diet of rice and black beans, the cloudy rum that looks like nasty medicine. Nor would they spend very many nights in the tottering, smelly, crammed rookeries in which the victims of Castro's dream must live, with their broken sewage pipes and their moody, expensive electricity supplied through ancient, fizzing cables.

But would it change their minds? Probably not. They would congratulate themselves on their fortitude and buy their Che Guevara souvenirs at the airport on their way home. They would continue to refer to the national dictator as "Fidel," as if they knew him, as if he were a friend or perhaps a rock star whose personality is so large that it belongs to the world. They are the latest victims of a strange delusion about this island, which has been far more important than the place or the people, for almost 50 years.

It is tempting to sympathize with the Cuban exiles of Miami, who cheerfully yearn for the death of Castro, describing this as the "biological solution" to the tragedy of the island to which they yearn to return. It is tempting to hope for an intervention, either by fate or by someone else.

But that is not really the point about Cuba. Mighty hands do not, in these prosaic times, stretch forth and pluck despots from their thrones. They do not even write upon the walls of their banqueting chambers that they have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. This sort of wishfulness, the blasphemous desire to stand in for an apparently absent and presumably wrathful deity, is the road to Baghdad and Fallujah and brings hell into the world. Indeed, it is American interventions in Cuba, from the Bay of Pigs to the crass embargo, which many—including this writer—believe to have rescued and then sustained Castro. And America's lawless prison at Guantanamo Bay, part of another such idealistic enterprise, has disastrously drawn attention away from Castro's own grotesque repressions. Our assaults on our own freedom obscure the view of his far worse ones.

The regrettable truth is that Cuba's future—seen as a medium-sized island state in the Caribbean rather than as a playground for grandiose ideas—may not be all that much better than its past. The choice may not be as blunt as the Castro-worshippers would have you believe. They suggest it lies between Meyer Lansky and their tropical Stalin, between the casino and the commissar, which is an oversimplification. But it certainly lies between being a client of the U.S. or a client of somebody else, with that somebody else almost certainly hoping to use the territory to tease or annoy. China—which recently and rather cheekily sent a detachment of peacekeepers to Haiti—and Venezuela are currently bidding for the patronage, one with credits, the other with oil.

So let us not invest too much emotion here. Castro, at the time of writing, was being displayed, still living and still oppressing his people, garbed in strange red pajamas instead of his usual military dictator's outfit. He was presumably filmed in his personal hospital at Punto Cero, Siboney, a few miles outside Havana where he is recovering from an operation on what is described as an "intestinal crisis."

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I was in Cuba when that intestinal crisis was developing, a Havana full of rumors about the Maximum Leader's approaching death. There had, at that moment, been no official announcement, though the robot media had begun to show deference to El Maximo's appointed heir, his brother Raul. But I was strangely affected by a disturbing display of dozens of black flags, caught by the ocean breeze on the Malecon, Havana's seafront.

The flags are actually there to block the view of an electronic news ticker in the windows of the U.S. "interests section," Washington's besieged embassy. In this they succeed. But they have the unintended and strangely unsettling effect of suggesting a place in mourning, like an ominous dream.

The city is also decorated with large posters of the leader, proclaiming *Vamos Bien*, "we're going well." But these portraits show a very old and rather pathetic Castro, grey and vague. This is because he is in rapid decline and it is futile to try to hide it. At his most recent public appearances, in Argentina and in Cuba, he has obviously been bleary, half-absent, and unwell, droning even more incoherently than before and repeatedly tugging uncomfortably at his own collar, as if in some kind of pain or discomfort. At one stage, the cameras swung away for a long view of the crowd, presumably on the orders of a director who feared that this display of decrepitude would weaken the regime. But it might have been Castro's own instruction. These days, he has a special monitor just in front of him, so that he can see exactly how his image is appearing on TV.

And who can blame him for his sensitivity? For Castro as a person is rather sordid, a life of bullying, selfishness, bigotry, violence, and vanity. As a Cuban politician he is a pitiful failure, the lawless betrayer of an originally liberal revolution, who has in 47 years transformed one of the most advanced countries in Latin America into one of the most backward, canceling elections and reversing the verdicts of trials. And now he is a physical shipwreck, still in charge of his country only because he has destroyed all legitimate mechanisms for a succession. Like several other idealist, "progressive" radical experiments, from Cromwell to Kim Il Sung, it has ended by resorting to succession by bloodline, so that his even more disagreeable younger brother, Raul, is the official heir.

His significance is spiritual, a potent brand with which millions of fools identify. It would be terrible for the cause of political vanity—and a sweet victory for the truth—if the image ever collapsed into the reality. There is a horrible Edgar Allan Poe story about a dead man kept alive for weeks by the power of hypnotism who, when the Mesmeric spell breaks, instantly sinks into a revolting mass of corruption. It would be something like that.

HE IS A PHYSICAL SHIPWRECK, **STILL IN CHARGE OF HIS COUNTRY** ONLY BECAUSE HE HAS **DESTROYED ALL LEGITIMATE MECHANISMS** FOR A SUCCESSION.

This may be more important outside Cuba than it is on the island itself. Castro has for five decades identified Marxism with romance, sexual power, rebellion, and adventure. This figure, in reality a spiteful, vainglorious killer and military dictator, has been the political equivalent of Mick Jagger for a generation of bourgeois bohemians who should have known better.

The fun-revolutionaries of 1968, philosophically chaotic, sentimental, cruel, arrogantly obsessed with youth, unable to believe in their own inevitable old age, and startlingly violent, saw in these men their ideal made flesh. The cultural Marxists who would storm their way through the institutions of the West imagined themselves as inspired by Cuban guerrilla bands in the Sierra Maestra, and in some ways still do.

They were never really interested in the state Castro created, its dingy economic realities, its sinister Soviet sponsors, and its windowless dungeons. They simply refused to notice Castro's long loathing of pop culture and his persecution of homosexuals, since these things did not fit their false picture of him. If challenged, they still make much of Cuba's supposed successes in medical provision and education, as if a sufficient number of rural doctors could cancel out the puncturing of the genitals of political offenders, which might be said to be the opposite of medical treatment.

As long as Castro lives, thumbing his nose at the U.S. the global Left likes to loathe, the imagined U.S. that they think is a fortress of conservatism, his image will remain as a potent lie sustaining one of history's most dishonest generations in its ill-informed self-righteousness.

When Castro dies, it just may be that —even for a short while—the prisons and the archives will be thrown open, the press will be freed and all the silenced voices of 50 years will be heard for a little while leaving a whole generation of dupes bereft, at last, of an illusion that has sustained them for far too long. And then they may discover that they have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. That would be good. ■

Peter Hitchens is a columnist for the London Mail on Sunday. *He is the author of* The Abolition of Britain.

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Trading Places

How to rekindle conversation between Left and Right

By John Zmirak

I REMEMBER WHEN liberals and conservatives used to be able to talk to each other. Sure, liberals had an important advantage, since they controlled most of the prestigious media. On the other hand, we conservatives had logic, tradition, and most of the facts on our side—which pretty much leveled the playing field. I was perfectly comfortable as a teenager taking up petitions for Ronald Reagan and ringing doorbells for the Right-to-Life Party candidate for NYC mayor. While it wasn't easy being the loudest (and almost the only public) conservative at Yale in the 1980s, I felt I had the Truth on my side—and was constantly subjected to criticism from the Left, which honed my ideas and arguments.

Things are different now. Those who call themselves conservatives have entire TV networks and chains of talk-radio stations on their side. They are able to preach to the choir—much as Pacifica Radio, National Public Radio, or campus newspapers in the Ivy League always have on the Left. Today's self-styled conservatives can go for months without encountering an opposing opinion—and if they happen to hit one, there are hundreds of blogs ready to dismiss the information or arguments they encountered as toxic byproducts of the "Mainstream Media" or "MSM." Likewise, the Left has plenty of comfy sandboxes where it can play, untroubled by alien ideas.

Indeed, there is little overlap between the increasingly polarized extremes of American discourse. The Left and Right are barely on speaking terms. You might be pardoned for believing they live on different planets. For the sake of keeping the peace, and establishing interplanetary harmony, I'd like to propose the following thought experiment. Let's play "Pretend." (This is gonna be fun, kids!)

Progressives, let's pretend that every single one of those fetuses aborted in America was an Iraqi civilian, killed by George W. Bush's failed policies.

Conservatives, let's imagine that each of those Iraqi civilians killed by George W. Bush's failed policies was a tiny, innocent fetus.

I told you this would be fun! Let's try again:

Progressives, every time you complain about the "Christian Right," just once plug in the "Jewish Left." Sounds kind of offensive, doesn't it?

PROGRESSIVES, EVERY TIME YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT THE "**CHRISTIAN RIGHT**," JUST ONCE PLUG IN THE "**JEWISH LEFT**." SOUNDS KIND OF OFFENSIVE, DOESN'T IT?

Conservatives, imagine that it had been Arabs, instead of Americans, who killed 200,000 civilians in Hiroshima to save the lives of their soldiers. Then it would have been an act of terrorism.

Progressives, imagine if George W. Bush were using force trying to spread feminism instead of capitalism. Would you still protest his wars?

Conservatives, imagine if it were Bill Clinton trying to suspend the Constitution to protect us against white terrorists like Timothy McVeigh. Would you call reporters "traitors" for covering it?

Progressives, imagine if instead of fossil fuels poisoning the atmosphere that your children will have to breathe, that it was porn.

Conservatives, imagine if the cause of global warming weren't the use of big old American-made Humvees and SUVs but acts of sodomy. Would you be out there trying to do something about it?

Progressives, pretend that every time Madonna stages a mock crucifixion on stage to sell tickets to her shows, instead she's appearing in blackface.

Conservatives, imagine that every innocent person who gets executed in America is a cute little blonde girl murdered by Muslims.

Progressives, pretend that every illegal immigrant who crosses the border is a scab crossing a picket line.

Conservatives, imagine if every scab crossing a picket line were an illegal immigrant crossing the Rio Grande.

Progressives, imagine if Islamic extremists promoting theocracy around the world were Baptist or Catholic instead, trying to impose Christianity.

Conservatives, imagine if the Arab Lobby dominated our Mideast policy—thanks to the support of preachers like

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Pat Robertson—and was able to destroy any politician in America who dared to criticize it.

Progressives, imagine if the Hollywood Ten, and all those blacklisted screenwriters, had been shilling for Hitler instead of Stalin. Would you still admire them for sticking to their principles?

Conservatives, let's pretend that every time the U.S. government uses force to topple a foreign regime and impose our system on the country, that it's an act of Big Government engaging in social engineering—like busing schoolkids for the sake of integration.

Progressives, imagine if in every instance in history where Christians were murdered by revolutionaries (from the French Revolution up through the Spanish Civil War), it were Jews or Tutsis or Bosnians instead. Would you still wear that funky little red star cap or that Che Guevara t-shirt?

Conservatives, let's pretend that the U.S. just outright stole Hawaii and Puerto Rico, the way Saddam Hussein stole Kuwait.

Progressives, imagine that stem-cell research was a plot by wealthy pharmaceutical companies to get the government to fund their labs in the hope that some day Third World women would sell their eggs or embryos, so that rich white people could live an extra ten years or so.

Conservatives, imagine if all those Christians driven out of Iraq and made homeless by the war in Lebanon were parishioners at your local church.

Both progressives and conservatives: imagine you were to apply the same standards to your own partisans and pet causes that you apply to the other side. Imagine how confusing life would get. ■

John Zmirak is author of The Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Living.

DEEPBACKGROUND

The White House has overcome resistance from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and has ordered plans to attack Iran after the November congressional elections. President Bush has made it clear, both publicly and privately, that Iran will not be allowed to develop a nuclear-weapons capability and that he intends to take direct action, whatever the consequences would be. It is well understood at the White House that if a naval and air assault is required in lieu of effective international sanctions that modify Iranian behavior there will be severe damage from Iranian retaliation. The U.S. Navy has been tasked with developing contingency plans to keep the Straits of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf open while Air Force planners have been tasked to destroy presumed nuclear sites and to cripple Tehran's offensive capabilities.

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Someone is also orchestrating a press campaign using fabricated news items to heighten concerns about Iran's nuclear program. Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian arms dealer involved in Iran/Contra and a close friend of leading neoconservative Michael Ledeen, was apparently one source of false information published in the Aug. 6 article in the *Sunday Times* of London. The article stated that Iran was clandestinely seeking to obtain uranium from the Congo. While it was true that a shipment of illicitly mined uranium ore had been intercepted last year, the Iranian connection was a complete fabrication and a clumsy one at that since Iran has its own uranium mines. The information was apparently provided by Ghorbanifar to the Pentagon's Iranian Directorate and from there it was somehow obtained by the *Times*. Another article in the *Sunday Times* of Sept. 3 describes how the Ukrainian security services provided Iran with intermediate-range missiles that are capable of carrying nuclear weapons. The transfer reportedly took place in 2004 and was facilitated by a local mafia boss. As Iran already has such missiles, developed with the help of North Korea, and lacks the warheads, the report has no credibility. The article cites no corroborative details and no names of individuals involved, which has raised the suspicion that it too is a fabricated effort to buttress criticism of Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program. It is possibly part of a disinformation operation by Israel's Mossad or by the Pentagon. Perhaps not coincidentally, the *Sunday Times* is owned by Rupert Murdoch, who also owns the neoconservative house organ *The Weekly Standard*.

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President Bush's Sept. 7 speech on secret CIA prisons cited a number of dubious cases where torture had allegedly produced information that "saved lives." Per Bush, one Abu Zubaydah, "who had received training on how to resist interrogation," was on the receiving end of CIA "alternative procedures" that forced him to reveal information that "identified" fellow terrorist Ramzi bin Shibh. The only problem in what is otherwise a rousing tale is that bin Shibh was well known both to the intelligence community and the media long before Zubaydah was captured. Zubaydah also reportedly has the mental capacity of a retarded child, making one wonder exactly what sort of interrogator working for what kind of government would be willing to subject him to torture.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.

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Back to the Future

Sustainable communties to come will be smaller and more beautiful.

By James Howard Kunstler

BACK IN THE EARLY 20th century, when the cheap oil fiesta was just getting underway and some major new technological innovation made its debut every month—cars, radio, movies, airplanes—there was no practical limit to what men of vision could imagine about the future city, though often their imaginings were ridiculous. The representative case is Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, 1887-1965), the leading architectural hoodoo-meister of Early High Modernism, whose 1925 *Plan Voisin* for Paris proposed to knock down the entire Marais district on the Right Bank and replace it with rows of identical towers set between freeways.

Luckily for Paris, the city officials laughed at him every time he came back with the scheme over the next 40 years—and Corb was nothing if not a relentless self-promoter. Ironically and tragically, though, the *Plan Voisin* model was later adopted gleefully by post-World War II American planners and resulted in such urban monstrosities as the infamous Cabrini-Green housing projects of Chicago and scores of things like it around the country.

Other visions of that early period involved Tom Swiftian scenes of Everest-size skyscrapers with Zeppelin moorings on top, linked to zooming air trams, while various types of personal helicopters swooped between. Virtually all these schemes had one thing in common: the city of the future they depicted was vibrant. We know now, here in the U.S. anyway, that this was the one thing they got most wrong. By 1970, many American cities were stone dead at their centers, especially the industrial giants of the Midwest. Ten years later, the American city of the future was the nightmare vision of "Blade Runner," an acid-rain-dripping ruin fit only for androids.

These days, a new generation of mojo architect savants such as Daniel Libeskind and Rem Koolhaas is retailing an urban futurism that is basically warmed-over Corb with an expressionist horror-movie spin, featuring torqued and tortured skyscrapers made possible by computer-aided design, clad in Darth Vader glass or other sheer surfaces, with grim public spaces exquisitely engineered to induce agoraphobia. There's more than a tinge of sadism in all this, though Koolhaas is much more explicit in his many writings than the less voluble Libeskind about consciously surrendering to a zeitgeist of cruel alienation. But these are also very rarified exercises among a tiny group of mutually referential fashionista narcissists, while the general public itself—at least the fraction that thinks about anything—only grudgingly goes along with it as a sort of drear obeisance to the religion of art.

An alternate awful urban vision of the future, advanced by public intellectuals such as author Mike Davis (*The Ecology of Fear*), is actually more about the city of the present: the Third World mega-slum embodied by such ghastly organisms as present-day Lagos, Lima, and Karachi. This is a vision of plain toxic hypertrophy with no particular artistic or architectural overlay to it. These cities have organized according to a simple logarithmic progression of horrible conditions—more people, more pollution, more poverty—nourished by cheap-energy globalism, with the expectation that they will only continue along that path and get worse.

Yet another vision of the future is supplied by the New Urbanists, who have campaigned for a return to the body of principle and methodology drawn from successful historic practice rather than science fiction, politics, or metaphysics. That is, they rely on urban design that has proven to work well in the past and is worth emulating—by which I mean the relations of buildings to public space and to each other, not the deployment of sewer lines and other infrastructure. The New Urbanists are marginalized because their reliance on tradition is considered sentimental and nostalgic. Their work is viewed by the mandarins of architecture through the lens of Modernist ideology, which, going back a hundred years to Adolf Loos's declaration that ornament is crime, has worked to decouple contemporary practice from what they regard as the filthy claptrap of history. Of course, Modernism itself has self-evidently become historical in its own right, and the more this is true, paradoxically, the more its defenders insist that history does not matter. Whatever else this represents in the form of intel-

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lectual imprudence, it at least promotes a discontinuity of human experience that cannot be healthy.

The New Urbanists are also disdained for their modesty of ambition. They are not interested in the biggest this or that. Their plans are typically scaled to the quarter-mile walk and rarely include super-sized buildings. The cutting edge holds no attractions for them in and of itself. They want to create neighborhoods and quarters, not intergalactic space ports. They want streets, squares, and building façades to provide decorum, legibility, and even beauty, while the latest crop of Modernists seek to confound our expectations about the urban environment as much as possible, in the service of generating anxiety rather than pleasure. The Modernists use the lame adjective "edgy" to describe their methods. It is supposed to signify excitement, novelty, and especially innovation, but mostly they have managed to innovate only new ways to make people feel bad about where they are.

The future direction of urban experience depends a great deal on an understanding of history, and of recent history in particular, because the hyperdevelopment of the past 200 years has followed the arc of increasing energy resources and, above all, we are now facing the worldwide depletion of energy resources.

As the industrial age gained traction in the early 19th century, so did the demographic trend of people increasingly moving from the farms and villages to the big cities. Industrial production was centralized in the cities and recruited armies of workers insatiably. Meanwhile, mechanized farming required fewer farmers to feed more people. The railroad, by its nature, favored centralization. By 1900, cities such as London and New York had evolved into mega-urbanisms of multiple millions of people. Around the same time, electrification was generally complete and with it came skyscrapers serviced by elevators. Over the next 20 years, oil moved ahead of coal as the primary fuel for transport and, especially in the U.S. where oil was cheap and abundant, led to mass automobile ownership. That, in turn, sparked the decanting of households into massive new suburban hinterlands, and to the extreme separation of activities by zoning law there, which climaxed—with interruptions for depression and war—in the evolution of the late 20th-century car-dependent metroplexes like Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix, and Atlanta. That is where things stand now.

Now my own view is that we face severe energy problems in the decades ahead, and they will not be ameliorated by any combination of alternative fuels or schemes for running them. This permanent global energy crisis will have all kinds of consequences, most particularly on our cities. These looming circumstances imply several major trends that contradict conventional expectations, especially of continued urban growth.

One certain impact will be the contraction of industrial activity per se and of the financial sector whose instruments and certificates represent the expectation of growth in accumulated wealth. This alone will constitute a basic challenge to industrial capitalism—apart from the sociopolitical strife that such financial catastrophe is apt to generate.

I hasten to add it is a mistake to suppose that the U.S. industrial economy has already been replaced by a so-called information economy or a consumer economy. In reality, manufacturing activities have been insidiously replaced over the past 20 years by a suburban-sprawl-building economy—and the mass production of suburban houses, highways, strip malls, and big-box stores is a different sort of manufacturing than making hair driers and TV sets. The sprawl industry also drove a reckless debt-creation racket and multiple layers of traffic in mortgages and spin-offs of mortgages (such as the derivatives trade based on bundled, securitized debt) that represents, at bottom, hallucinated wealth that in turn has spread false liquidity through the equity markets and is certain to affect them badly sooner or later. All this is what we have been calling the "housing bubble," and it is now beginning to fly apart with deadly effect.

Much of the suburban real estate produced by this process is destined to lose its supposed value, both in practical and monetary terms as energy scarcities get traction. So on top of the sheer distortions and perversities of the glut in bad mortgage paper, America will be faced with the accelerating worthlessness of the collateral—the houses, Jiffy Lubes, and office parks—as gasoline prices go up, long commutes become untenable, jobs along with incomes are lost, and the cost of heating houses larger than 1,500 square feet becomes an insuperable burden.

All this is to say that the suburban rings of our cities have poor prospects in the future. They represent a massive

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tragic misinvestment, perhaps the greatest misallocation of resources in the history of the world. It is hard to say how this stuff might be reused or retrofitted, if at all, but some of it, perhaps a lot, may end up as a combined salvage yard and sheer ruin.

Another major impact of the coming energy scarcity will be the end of industrial agriculture. Without abundant and cheap oil- and gas-based fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fuels for running huge machines and irrigation systems, we will have to make other arrangements for feeding ourselves. Crop yields will go down—a big reason, by the way, to be skeptical of ethanol and bio-diesel alternative fuel schemes based on corn or soybean crops. We will have to grow food closer to home, on a smaller scale, probably requiring more human and even animal labor, and agriculture is likely to come closer to the center of economic life than it has within memory—at the same time that mass-production homebuilding, tourism based on mass aviation, easy motoring, and a host of other obsolete activities fade into history.

pre-automobile city is relatively tiny and concentrated in the old center around a complex harbor system. With little need for industrial workers, vast neighborhoods of row housing built for them are either abandoned or inhabited now only by such economically distressed people that abandonment is inevitable. The pattern of contraction may not be identical in all American cities.

In some it will be a lot worse. Phoenix, Tucson, and Las Vegas will just dry up and blow away, since local agriculture will not be possible and they will be afflicted with severe water problems on top of all the other problems growing out of energy scarcity and an extreme car-dependent development pattern. Cities in the "wet" sunbelt such as Houston, Orlando, and Atlanta will probably still be there but revert to insignificance for the additional simple reason that a lack of cheap air conditioning will make them unbearable.

It is worth keeping in mind that cities generally are located on important geographical sites—harbors, rivers, railroad junctions—and some kind of urban settlement is likely to persist in

THE **URBAN UNDERCLASS** WILL BE **SQUEEZED EVEN HARDER** THAN THE SUFFERING MIDDLE CLASSES, AND THEY ALREADY HAVE A **NASCENT WARRIOR** CULTURE THAT COULD **EASILY REDIRECT ITS ENERGIES** FROM HIP-HOP ENTERTAINMENT TO **REAL GUERRILLA WARFARE**.

I think this will lead to an epochal demographic shift, a reversal of the 200 year long trend of people moving from the farms and rural places to the big cities. Instead, I believe we will see a substantial contraction of our cities at the same time that they densify at their cores and along their waterfronts. A preview of this can be seen in Baltimore today. The remaining viable fabric of the many of these places unless climate change drowns them. In recent years, most waterfront property has been reassigned from industrial and commercial uses to condominium sites and greenways. This will not continue. If we are going to have any kind of commerce between one place and another, we will have to reactivate our waterfronts for shipping—and not necessarily of the automated steel-container variety. Like virtually everything else in the coming energy-scarce world, maritime trade will have to be rescaled. It may even have to rely on wind power again to some extent. These operations will require wharves, warehouses, cheap quarters for sailors, and all the other furnishings typically required through history.

Those who are infatuated with skyscrapers are going to be disappointed. I do not think we will be building many more of them further along in this century. We will have trouble running the ones we have, since most of the glass towers built after 1965 have inoperable windows, and even the ones that have them would have to be retrofitted for coal furnaces, and a less than absolutely reliable electric-power grid may make life in a 25th-floor apartment impossible when the elevators go out. In short, I think we will discover that the skyscraper was purely a product of the cheap oil and gas age. Exciting as they may be, we might have to live without them.

The process I have described will probably be messy. Social turbulence should be expected. For instance, the urban underclass will be squeezed even harder than the suffering middle classes, and they already have a nascent warrior culture that could easily redirect its energies from hip-hop entertainment to real guerrilla warfare if the competition for resources becomes desperate. Economic distress in the U.S. is also likely only to aggravate unfavorable conditions in Mexico, sending increased streams of impoverished migrants north. Meanwhile, the faltering U.S. middle classes may be so inflamed by the loss of their entitlement to an easy-motoring existence that they will vote for maniacs and venture into scapegoating. I certainly expect the American public and their leaders to

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mount a vigorous defense of suburbia, even if it proves to be a gigantic exercise in futility and a waste of precious resources.

We will be lucky if we can make the transition from our current circumstances to a future of re-sized, re-scaled cities and a reactivated productive rural landscape outside them, with a hierarchy of hamlets, villages, and towns in between, and some ability to conduct commerce and manufacturing. This would, in effect, be a reversion to prior living arrangements, and to some extent it is a model proposed by the New Urbanists—or at least a template they would understand as fundamental. Many things might stand in the way of this. The physical disaggregation of civic life in our small towns is now so extreme that nothing might avail to repair it, especially since we will have far less capital to work with. The suburbs running from Boston through New Jersey to Washington have paved over some of the best farmland in the nation's most populous region, and it may be centuries before it is restored to productivity, if ever. Physical security may become so tenuous that people will sell their allegiance for protection or take to living behind fortifications. In earlier periods of history when societies got into trouble—for instance, the plague years in Europe—rural places were beset by banditry and lawlessness, adding another layer of difficulty to food production on top of the loss of the peasant labor.

We don't know how any of these things may actually play out. I have not even mentioned the potential for geopolitical mischief, which could skew the picture a lot more. But the urban future isn't what it was cracked up to be when we were riding high, surfing the big waves of cheap energy in the seemingly endless summer of oil. It won't be fun fun fun 'til Daddy takes the T-bird away. It won't be a Herbert Muschamp smorgasbord of delicious, rarified architectural irony. The Koolhaas celebration of alienation will not seem worth partying for. The metaphysics of Libeskind and Peter Eisenman will stand naked in their phoniness. By and by, even the mega-slums of the Third World will contract as the surplus grain supplies of the formerly developed nations are reduced to nothing and export ceases.

I often wonder what people will think decades from now if they are able to view those old Doris Day and Rock Hudson comedies of the mid 20th century. Invariably these stories took place in a Manhattan of sparkly new glass towers and streets full of cars with tail fins and companies that ruled the world and men and women who had come back from a World War full of confidence that there was no limit to what people with good intentions could do and nothing that they couldn't handle. We are their children and grandchildren, and it is a different world now. ■

James Howard Kunstler is the author of The Long Emergency *and other books.*

Provoking Pakistan

Making Musharraf our puppet stokes the Kashmir crisis.

By Eric S. Margolis

ONE OF THE ODDER ASPECTS of President George W. Bush's campaign to export democracy is that Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, whom Bush hails as one of his closest allies in these struggles, is a military dictator who runs a nation accused of being a primary producer of violent anti-Western groups.

Pakistan is often described as a dangerously unstable nation seething with terrorist cells that could seize control of its nuclear arsenal if Musharraf is assassinated or if his increasingly unpopular and isolated military regime collapses. Indeed, Britain's recent arrests of more than three score of its citizens of Pakistani descent on terrorism charges reinforces Western suspicions that Pakistan remains a hotbed of Islamic radicalism and haven for al-Qaeda and the Taliban's elusive leaders.

Yet Pakistan has been unstable since its creation in 1947, when the dying British Empire abruptly divided India, and simply to dismiss it as a font of anti-Western terrorism understates the dizzying complexities and motivations of this turbulent nation of 162.4 million people.

At present, Pakistan's army and intelligence service, ISI, is firmly in control of the country's nuclear arsenal, and Pakistan's military government has played a crucial role in the so-called war on terrorism. Close to 1,000 al-Qaeda suspects, including key ringleaders and a prime suspect in the London airline plot, have been arrested by Pakistan, and most have been turned over to the United States. This has roused suspicions that whenever Pakistan has gotten into Washington's bad books—for example, for black-marketeering nuclear technology or suspicions it was shelter-

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ing bin Laden—or when it needed more U.S. aid, Islamabad suddenly discovers "senior al-Qaeda leaders," arrests them, tortures them, and then hands them over to the U.S. rendition program.

At the same time, anti-Western hostility is boiling among Pakistan's people. Recent polls show that over the past five years, Pakistanis have gone from enormously admiring the United States and regarding it as their principal ally and defender to seeing it today as an implacable enemy and a persecutor of the Muslim world. Osama bin Laden commands widespread respect and popularity, while President Bush is regularly compared to Adolf Hitler by Pakistan's so far uncensored press. Almost every Pakistani regards events in Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq as examples of America's intensifying war against Islam.

However, the primary focus of Pakistani anger is not America but old enemy India. American and Indian intelligence, which are now co-operating closely, claim that some 50 terrorist or extremist groups are currently operating in Pakistan. The best known are Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Toiba, and Harakut-al-Ansar, which are far less concerned with anti-Western projects than Pakistan's most cherished national cause: freeing the Indian-ruled portion of divided Kashmir and uniting it with Pakistan. (India claims virtually all these groups are run by ISI. Pakistan denies such charges.)

Kashmir dominates Pakistani politics and enflames emotions the same way Israel arouses powerful responses among the Jewish Diaspora. Interestingly, Pakistan was founded a year before Israel as a beacon of righteousness for Islam and a safe haven for the world's persecuted Muslims. This writer has often called it the Muslim Israel.

In 1947, imperial Britain, creator of so many of our modern world's problems, divided India with unseemly haste and lack of adequate study then decamped, leaving war and chaos in its wake. One million Hindus and Muslims were slaughtered in ethnic cleansing attending the birth of India and Pakistan.

Certain of India's princely states were given the choice to join India or Pakistan. The Hindu ruler of India's only Muslim majority state, Kashmir, opted for India under pressure from Nehru. His people, however, desiring union with Pakistan, revolted. Pakistan and India rushed troops into the strategic mountain state. After confused fighting, Pakistan ended up with one third of Kashmir and India the better two thirds.

WHILE **WASHINGTON PREACHED DEMOCRACY**, PAKISTAN'S PRESIDENT KEPT **RIGGING ELECTIONS** AND STUFFING PARLIAMENT WITH YES MEN. TO NO SURPRISE, **LOCAL ISLAMISTS TRAINED THEIR GUNS**—AND BOMBS—ON MUSHARRAF

Since then, India and Pakistan have fought three major wars and innumerable skirmishes over Kashmir, the Alsace-Lorraine of Asia. In 1999, a Pakistani incursion into the Indian Kargil region of Kashmir brought the two old enemies to the brink of nuclear war. India's generals begged Delhi to let them launch a massive invasion of Pakistan. Both sides readied nuclear-armed strike aircraft for imminent action.

The Kargil confrontation was the closest the world has come to nuclear war since the Cuban missile crisis. Yet the ongoing threat of an India-Pakistan nuclear war, which the RAND Corporation estimated could kill two million people outright, injure 100 million, and contaminate the entire globe, has been largely ignored by Washington while it obsesses over the nonexistent nuclear arsenals of Iraq and Iran.

In 1989, Kashmiri Muslims staged a popular uprising against often brutal, corrupt Indian rule. Numerous small independence groups took the field against Indian security forces. Many, but not all, were subsequently trained, armed, and financed by ISI at "jihadi" camps in the Pakistan-controlled portion of Kashmir, or Azad Kashmir, and in Afghanistan. The U.S. later mistakenly called these Afghan camps al-Qaeda terrorist camps.

Kashmir's jihadis were native Kashmiris and mujahedeen veterans of Afghanistan. A few had personal connections to al-Qaeda from Afghan days. They have waged a dirty, bloody war against India in which 65,000 have so far died.

Both sides have committed frightful atrocities. Indian human-rights groups accuse their nation's 500,000 soldiers and paramilitary forces garrisoned in Kashmir of routine torture, collective punishments, gang rapes, and extra-judicial executions. Elaborate border security systems built with Israeli help have decreased, but not eliminated, what India calls "cross border terrorism" from Azad Kashmir. Other Kashmiri jihadis have attacked India directly.

Delhi, however, scored a major victory when after 9/11 it convinced the Bush administration to brand leading Pakistan-based Kashmiri jihadi groups as terrorists. Washington also armtwisted the Musharraf regime into publicly abandoning the Kashmiri liberation struggle and reluctantly agreeing to call its members terrorists. Islamabad's *volte-face* delivered an enormous propaganda victory to India.

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Not surprisingly, it also enraged Pakistanis against Musharraf. Coming soon after he abandoned the Taliban, which had been nurtured and armed by Pakistan, this "betrayal" of the nation's most sacred cause convinced many Pakistanis that Musharraf was indeed a lackey of Washington, as his foes claimed.

Fury against Musharraf grew after he made noises about opening relations with Israel. His sporadic efforts to lower tensions with India over Kashmir produced some gestures but few concrete results. Thanks to its new strategic alliance with Washington, India knew it held the upper hand and had Pakistan on the defensive. India saw no need to compromise and after last July's Bombay train bombings, Delhi resumed accusing Pakistan of authoring much of the violence afflicting India.

Musharraf's decision to allow the U.S. to covertly set up three secret bases in Pakistan for use against Taliban and other Afghan resistance forces, and against Iran, when the time comes, caused a further uproar.

While Washington preached democracy, Pakistan's president kept rigging elections and stuffing Parliament with yes men. To no surprise, local Islamists trained their guns—and bombs—on Musharraf, who narrowly survived two assassination attempts. There were whispers in the bazaars that the attacks were not from al-Qaeda, as the regime claimed, but from restive army officers.

After heavy pressure from the Bush administration, Musharraf unleashed his army against the autonomous tribal areas of the Northwest Frontier Province in an effort to find fugitive al-Qaeda leaders and crush local support for the Taliban. Over 3,000 Waziri tribesmen and around 1,000 Pakistani troops died in Musharraf's little war against his own people. Critics howled, "Fight India, not Muslims!"

In late August 2006, Musharraf again sent troops to fight Pakistanis, this time in strategic Baluchistan. The most respected Baluchi tribal leader, Nawab Akbar Bugti, was killed by Musharraf's troops, an act that ignited outrage across the nation and shredded the Musharraf regime's last claim to legitimacy.

ACCUSATIONS THAT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT IS **PLAYING A DOUBLE GAME** BY KOWTOWING TO WASHINGTON WHILE **SECRETLY AIDING THE JIHADI MOVEMENT** ARE VERY LIKELY TRUE.

Pakistanis blame the United States for the Musharraf dictatorship and its abandonment of Muslim causes. Their president now resembles Egypt's late Anwar Sadat: lauded and feted abroad as the West's new best friend but hated by all at home, save a small coterie of corrupt businessmen, generals, and bureaucrats. Like Sadat and successor Mubarak, Musharraf's elimination of moderate opponents leaves Pakistanis with a stark choice between military rule and underground Islamic extremists.

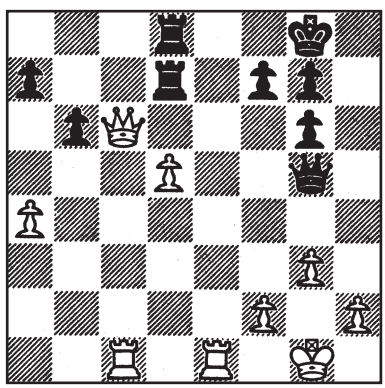
Even among the powerful military and security services, Pakistan's only effective institutions, there is discreet but widespread support for Islamic militants, Kashmiri jihadis, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. Accusations that Pakistan's security establishment is playing a double game by kowtowing to Washington while secretly aiding the jihadi movement are very likely true.

Because keeping Musharraf as a puppet serves our purposes, the U.S. is doing nothing to address this, the world's oldest, most perilous confrontation. But we pay a high price: Islamic militancy in Pakistan will not be reduced until the festering Kashmir dispute is fairly settled.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration continues to use its vast powers to bend the Musharraf regime to its will. But the general has bent over so far backwards, his regime is close to breaking. Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution showed that forcing a dictatorial regime to do what its people hate is a formula for revolt that will produce radical, anti-American policies.

America's most urgent priority in Pakistan, therefore, should be to guide its rapid return to real democracy, followed by resolution of the Kashmir crisis. We have reached a tipping point, and not addressing these critically important issues will likely ensure that Pakistan indeed becomes the nuclear-armed hotbed of anti-Americanism that many believe it to be today. ■

Eric S. Margolis is the author of War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia, *and a columnist, commentator, and war correspondent.*



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Paris, 1925

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[Idiocracy]

The Morons Shall Inherit the Earth

By Steve Sailer

PERHAPS THE MOST GIFTED populist conservative in the entertainment industry is Mike Judge, creator of the TV animated comedies "Beavis & Butt-Head" and "King of the Hill" (now scheduled for an 11th season on Fox in 2007), as well as the 1999 cult classic film "Office Space."

Despite Judge's commercial consistency, his clever and frequently hilarious new satire "Idiocracy" has been deep-sixed by his own studio, Rupert Murdoch's 20th Century Fox, with the most passive-aggressive release of any film in memory. Over the Labor Day weekend "Idiocracy" materialized in 130 theatres in seven cities (but not in New York, so national media coverage was nonexistent) bereft of even a trailer or the smallest newspaper ad. Fox couldn't even be bothered to tell Moviefone the name of the film—you had to search for it under "New Mike Judge Comedy."

Judge, who worked for years as an engineer at the kind of manhood-crushing cubicle jobs parodied in "Office Space," is an intensely intelligent paleoconservative observer of red-state life and its degradation by liberal social mores and commercial vulgarization.

His recurrent themes are masculinity, class, IQ, and character. His hero Hank Hill of "King of the Hill" is the most admirable sitcom father since "The Cosby Show" and likely the white TV dad most worthy of respect since the 1950s. Although a man of no more than average intelligence, Hank diligently subscribes to the traditional American manly virtues.

"Idiocracy" is an updating of C.M. Kornbluth's famous 1951 science fiction story about dysgenic breeding, "The Marching Morons." It opens with a yuppie husband and wife on the left half of the screen (IQs of 138 and 141 respectively) endlessly debating the perfect moment to conceive their one child: "We just can't have a child in *this* market." Meanwhile, on the right side, Clevon is impregnating every woman in the trailer park.

Unambitious Private Joe Bauers (Luke Wilson) is another of Judge's average-man heroes. Because he scored at the median of every bell curve from IQ to blood pressure, Bauers is drafted for a military "human hibernation" experiment, an idea presumably lifted from Robert Heinlein's *The Door Into Summer*, in which the Army keeps a few divisions on ice in case of war. Due to a scandal, the private is forgotten and awakes in 500 years. To his horror, he discovers that after 20 generations everyone is a Clevon, and he's now the smartest man in America.

As he showed in "Beavis & Butt-Head," Judge has a genius for stupidity. The visual details of a Washington, D.C. populated solely by morons are memorable: a collapsing skyscraper is held together by wrapping it with oversized twine; the White House has broken cars up on blocks on the dying lawn and the "President of America" is a professional wrestler; and at "St. God's Hospital" the illiterate admitting nurse is equipped with a fast-food-style touch-screen menu with diagrams of common ailments, such as a stick-figure man with a knife stuck in his head. All clothing is plastered with corporate logos and the secretary of state is paid to insert the phrase "brought to you by Carl's Jr." into everything he says.

Although we like to think of the unintelligent as sweet Forrest Gumps, in Judge's dystopia everyone is a surly jerk to Private Bauers because he speaks in complete sentences, which the denizens of the 26th century find "faggy."

"Idiocracy" isn't perfect. At only 84 minutes, it looks like it was hacked up in editing. A narrator very slowly explains natural selection and too many of the jokes.

Did Fox murder this film's release as part of a complex metamarketing plot to turn it into a DVD hit? Did the corporations satirized in it threaten to pull advertising from the Fox Network? Or did Fox executives not realize until after Judge had delivered his movie in 2004 that he'd lifted his basic idea from *The Bell Curve* and that You Just Can't Say That anymore?

That the poor have more children than the rich has been observed at least since Adam Smith in 1776. The long-term effect is much less clear. Yet can't an artist be allowed to explore the comic possibilities of a logic we've all privately thought about? Isn't this the land of the free and the home of the brave? I guess not. ■

Rated R for language and sex-related humor.

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BOOKS

[War by Other Means: An Insider's Account of the War on Terror, John Yoo, Atlantic Monthly Press, 224 pages]

He Wrote the Book on Torture

By James Bovard

GEORGE W. BUSH has made absolutism respectable among American conservatives. And no one has done more pimping for president-as-Supreme-Leader than John Yoo, the former Justice Department official who helped create the "commander-in-chief override" doctrine, unleashing presidents from the confines of the law. At a time when Bush is pushing Congress to approve the use in military tribunals of confessions that resulted from torture, it is vital to understand the thinking of the Bush administration's most visible advocate of "coercive interrogation."

Yoo's new book, *War by Other Means: An Insider's Account of the War on Terror*, reads like a slippery lawyer's brief submitted to a dim judge who gets all his information from Fox News. Though Yoo's misrepresentations and omissions should provoke outrage, his book will likely receive accolades from many conservative reviewers. This new volume compliments Yoo's first book, *The Powers of War and Peace*, which revealed that the Founding Fathers intended to permit presidents to start wars on their own whims, regardless of what the Constitution says.

Perhaps Yoo's authoritarian tendencies resulted from his time at Harvard, where empowering an elite is always in fashion. Yoo paints every proposal for limiting the president's power as a dangerous novelty. He is always trying to shift the burden of proof onto anyone who thinks the president should not be a czar.

He scoffs at critics of the phrase "war on terror" while admitting "the United States is not at war with every terrorist group in the world, or all who employ terrorist tactics, or a social problem, but with Al Qaeda." Yet top administration officials were laying plans to invade Iraq within days after the Twin Towers collapsed. Two weeks after 9/11, Yoo, in a memo to the White House, claimed that the attacks gave the U.S. government carte blanche for war anywhere in the world. Yoo suggested that "an American attack in South America or Southeast Asia might be a surprise to the terrorists," since they were expecting the U.S. to target Afghanistan. Yoo assured the White House that "the President's broad constitutional power ... would allow the President to [take] whatever actions he deems appropriate to pre-empt or respond to terrorist threats from new quarters." Yoo's assurances may have inspired Bush's declaration a few weeks later that "So long as anybody's terrorizing established governments, there needs to be a war."

Yoo wrote a Torturers' Emancipation Proclamation memo while serving as deputy assistant attorney general. He informed the White House in August 2002 that it could scorn federal law because "the President enjoys complete discretion in the exercise of his Commander-in-Chief authority and in conducting operations against hostile forces we will not read a criminal statute as infringing on the President's ultimate authority in these areas." Thus, the "commander-in-chief" title automatically swallows up the rest of the Constitution.

Yoo's memo began by largely redefining torture out of existence. It then explained that even if someone died during torture, the torturer might not be guilty if he felt the torture was necessary to prevent some worse evil. Yoo preemptively exonerated any U.S. torturer: "If a government defendant were to harm an enemy combatant during an interrogation in a manner that might arguably violate [the Anti-Torture Act], he would be doing so in order to prevent further attacks on the United States by the al Qaeda terrorist network." Yoo never explained why preventing a catastrophic attack is the only reason why a suspect might be maimed during interrogation.

War by Other Means endlessly refers to Abu Ghraib as if that were the alpha and omega of the torture scandal. In reality, the photos in late April 2004 were not even the tip of the iceberg. U.S. government agents have inflicted abuses ranging from the endless high-volume repetition of a "Meow Mix" cat food commercial at Guantanamo to tearing out toenails in Afghanistan, from compulsory enemas for recalcitrant prisoners to beating people to death in Iraq and kicking them to death outside Kabul, from illegally sending detainees to foreign governments to be tortured by proxy to creating a system of "ghost prisoners" worthy of a banana republic.

Yet Yoo implies that the torture scandal may be largely a liberal media concoction. After citing *The New Yorker*'s Seymour Hersh, Yoo says, "Articles have appeared claiming abuses at Guantanamo such as long-term isolation, stress positions, and exposure to extreme heat or cold or noise. At this writing we cannot know if such reports are false, or isolated examples. They are currently unverified and the subject of continuing investigations."

Unverified—except for a deluge of e-mails from FBI agents who visited Gitmo and were horrified by what they saw. An FBI agent reported on Dec. 5, 2003 that the "torture techniques" used at Gitmo have "produced no intelligence of a threat neutralization nature." One FBI agent complained about a female U.S. military interrogator who yanked back a shackled prisoner's thumbs and grabbed his genitals. Another FBI agent e-mailed bureau headquarters on Aug. 2, 2004 after seeing detainees "chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chair, food or water. Most times they had urinated or defecated on

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themselves and had been left there for 18, 24 hours or more." FBI agents also observed that detainees were being abused with extreme temperatures and loud rap music. An agent detailed to Iraq complained to FBI headquarters in June 2004 after seeing U.S. forces involved in "numerous serious physical abuse incidents of Iraqi civilian detainees ... strangulation, beatings, placement of lit cigarettes into the detainees' ear openings." (The FBI memos were disclosed as a result of an ACLU lawsuit.)

Yoo plays to True Believers throughout the book, invoking Vice President Dick Cheney as an authority on the value of torture—as well as "the popular Fox television program *24*." But he ignores FBI and military experts who disdain torture because it generates false confessions. A prime example Yoo offers of the merits of "coercive interrogation" involved allegations that sparked Attorney General John Ashcroft to issue a warning in May 2004 that "Al Qaeda planned to attack the United States that summer. ... The attacks never happened; perhaps the intensive scrutiny caused El Shukrijumah [a Saudi al-Qaeda operative] and his cell to scuttle their plans."

Actually, this warning was one of the biggest farces of Bush's 2004 fear-mongering election campaign. Ashcroft's May 26 warning was quickly repudiated by Homeland Security Department officials who informed the media that "there was no new information about attacks in the U.S., and ... no change in the government's color-coded 'threat level.'" NBC News reported that Ashcroft's primary al-Qaeda source was "a largely discredited group, Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, known for putting propaganda on the Internet" that had falsely "claimed responsibility for the power blackout in the Northeast last year, a power outage in London, and the Madrid bombings." The group's warning consisted of one email sent two months earlier to a London newspaper. *Newsweek* reported that the White House "played a role in the decision to go public with the warning … . Instead of the images of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, the White House would prefer that voters see the faces of terrorists who aim to kill them."

Yoo's claims about the benefits of torture were effectively obliterated on Sept. 6 by Lt. Gen. John Kimmons, the Army deputy chief of staff for intelligence. Kimmons announced at a Pentagon news conference, "no good intelligence is going to come from abusive practices. I think history tells us that. I think the empirical evidence of the last five years, hard years, tells us that." Kimmons has vastly more credibility on interrogation methods than desk warriors like Yoo.

The more power Yoo believes the president deserves, the more obfuscations he makes about how existing power has been used. Though this book went to press in July 2006, Yoo relies on dubious data from September 2004 to exonerate the federal torturers. Yoo cites a report done by a committee headed by Vice Admiral Albert Church, who literally became a laughingstock when he testified in March 2005 before the Senate Armed Services committee. Church, charged with investigating detainee abuse in Iraq, never bothered interviewing Paul Bremer, the chief of the Coalition Provisional Authority. Church explained: "Ambassador Bremer, as I understood it, worked for the Department of State." This assertion stunned the senators, as Bremer was a Pentagon employee and directly in the military chain of command.

Regardless, Yoo relies on this guy as a top defense witness: "Church's investigation found (as of September 2004) 71 cases of detainee abuse and 6 deaths, and with only 20 of those cases involving interrogation, and 130 cases still under investigation." Yoo asserts, "this is an extremely low error rate," considering that the U.S. had detained 50,000 people at that point.

The week after Church testified, the Pentagon admitted that 26 detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan had been killed in what appeared to be criminal homicides—more than four times as many homicides as Church noticed. Yoo disdained updating the morgue count. And it has become obvious since last Fall that the feds greatly undercounted their interrogation victims. Captain Ian Fishback of the 82nd Airborne repeatedly unsuccessfully sought to get guidance from superiors on the standards for lawful and humane treatment of detainees in Iraq. Fishback publicly complained late last year: "I am certain that this confusion contributed to a wide range of abuses including death threats, beatings, broken bones, murder, exposure to elements, extreme forced physical exertion, hostage-taking, stripping, sleep deprivation and degrading treatment." Tony Lagouranis, a former army interrogator at Abu Ghraib and member of a special intelligence team in Iraq, told PBS's "Frontline": "It's all over Iraq. The infantry units are torturing people in their homes. They would smash people's feet with the back of an axhead. They would break bones, ribs."

None of this appears in Yoo's book.

In *War by Other Means*, Yoo eschews following his logic to its conclusions. He was more forthcoming in a debate last December when asked: "If the president deems that he's got to torture somebody including by crushing the testicles of the person's child, there is no law that can stop him?" Yoo replied, "No treaty." His opponent, Notre Dame law professor Doug Cassell, followed up: "Also no law—that is what you wrote in the August 2002 memo." Yoo replied, "I

YOO PLAYS TO TRUE BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, INVOKING VICE PRESIDENT **DICK CHENEY AS AN AUTHORITY ON THE VALUE OF TORTURE**— AS WELL AS "THE POPULAR **FOX TELEVISION PROGRAM *24*.**"

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think it depends on why the president thinks he needs to do that." (One blogger summarized Yoo's philosophy of government: "All Your Balls Belong to Us!") Yoo has yet to specify appropriate presidential pretexts for juvenile testicular demolition.

While curtsying to the prevailing rhetoric on democracy, Yoo shows contempt for "government by consent." He claims the 2004 election vindicated Bush's torture policy: "Our nation had a presidential and congressional election after Abu Ghraib and the leaking of the [2002] memos. If the people had disagreed with administration policies, they could have made a change."

How could the people judge the policy when the Bush administration was suppressing almost all information about it? There were no independent probes into the torture scandal during 2004. All the investigators were under the thumb of the Pentagon. The investigations were designed to look only downward—with no authority to pursue wrongdoing to the highest branches of the Pentagon and the White House. The Bush team succeeded in delaying the vast majority of damning revelations until after he was re-elected. Presumably, the public can "approve" atrocities even when the government deceives them about the actual events.

Yoo reasons like a devious personal-injury lawyer—yet it is the rights of the American people that are being run over. He is being feted by conservative foundations and think tanks, and often treated deferentially by liberals, for a theory of presidential power that would make Hobbes proud.

Yoo believes Americans should presume that the government always has a good reason for violating the law, even when it deceives the citizens about the reasoning. Yoo's doctrines are absolutely unfit for any system with a pretense of self-government. ■

James Bovard is the author, most recently, of Attention Deficit Democracy *and* The Bush Betrayal.

[The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background, Klaus Gamber, Roman Catholic Books, 198 pages]

Recovering the Lost Liturgy

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

KLAUS GAMBER'S BOOK *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* was and is a publishing event, one of the most significant in the Catholic world in a generation. It sent shock waves throughout Europe when it first appeared there 16 years ago, and its appearance here during the pontificate of Benedict XVI—who as Cardinal Ratzinger provocatively endorsed it with a pointed preface to the French edition—promises to be no less eventful.

High Church politics is unfolding. The Mass is the center of Church life. Insiders expect Benedict to forcefully restore the old Latin Mass, at least as an option, thereby extending the baby steps taken by John Paul II, whose heart was clearly not in it, to atone for expunging the Latin liturgy from the life of the average Catholic after Vatican II.

This book provides, in bite-sized chapters, all the background. It is common knowledge that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI dramatically revised the text and rubrics of the Mass. Whether the Council Fathers envisioned the radical changes that were ultimately made is a matter of dispute, but recent research by Father Brian Harrison of the Pontifical University of Puerto Rico found that most of the leading bishops as Vatican II opened favored only minor changes rather than a sweeping revision of the entire rite.

But a sweeping revision of the entire rite is exactly what we got.

Apologists for the reform tried to claim that the Mass had been changed countless times in the past and therefore that the discontent surrounding this most recent round of changes must reflect either a lack of acquaintance with the checkered history of the Mass or a reactionary attachment to older forms for their own sake. But none of the organic and virtually imperceptible changes that had been made over the centuries was anything like the reform of the 1960s, in which a committee radically overhauled the entire rite.

Motivations for changing the rite varied, ranging from the pastoral concerns of misguided men of good will all the way to the downright sinister. Some, moved either by neo-Jansenism or Enlightenment contempt for the Middle Ages, claimed they were returning the Mass to its apostolic simplicity in light of recent liturgical research. This argument has not held up over time: research more recent still has shown that as a result of misreadings of the ancient sources, major aspects of the new rite—from the Prayer of the Faithful to concelebration to the practice of Mass facing the people—are in fact modern fabrications with no ancient analogue.

Others claimed they wanted to make the Mass more understandable to the people. But if that were all they were after, there was no need to draw up a completely new rite: they could simply have translated the traditional Mass into the vernacular.

Whatever the motivations behind the changes, though, Pope Paul VI acknowledged that something of priceless worth was being given up when he introduced his new rite in 1969-70. "A new rite of Mass: a change in the venerable tradition that has gone on for centuries. This is something that affects our hereditary religious patrimony, which seemed to enjoy the privilege of being untouchable and settled. It seemed to bring the prayer of our forefathers and our saints to our lips and to give us the comfort of feeling faithful to our spiritual past, which we kept alive to pass it on to the generations ahead."

And although some even now pretend that stripping away the Latin language was the furthest thing from anyone's mind at the time and that the abandonment of Latin was merely the unfortu-

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nate result of a later misunderstanding of the reform, Paul VI spoke as if the loss of Latin was a clear and unavoidable aspect of the new Mass. And again, he used words upon which the most devoted Catholic traditionalist could scarcely have improved: "We are parting with the speech of the Christian centuries; we are becoming like profane intruders in the literary preserve of sacred utterance."

When it looked as if the traditional Mass was doomed, a group of 57 distinguished writers, scholars, artists, and historians in England—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—signed a petition urging Pope Paul to reconsider. The signatories of the appeal, who included Agatha Christie, Graham Greene, and Malcolm Muggeridge, urged that, apart from the spiritual ramifications of the abolition of the traditional Mass, the rite itself, "in its magnificent Latin text, has also inspired a host of priceless achievements in the arts—not only mystical works, but works by poets, philosophers, musicians, architects, painters and sculptors in all countries and epochs. Thus, it belongs to universal culture as well as to churchmen and formal Christians."

The appeal continued:

> One of the axioms of contemporary publicity, religious as well as secular, is that modern man in general, and intellectuals in particular, have become intolerant of all forms of tradition and are anxious to suppress them and put something else in their place. But, like many other affirmations of our publicity machines, this axiom is false. Today, as in times gone by, educated people are in the vanguard where recognition of the value of tradition is concerned, and are the first to raise the alarm when it is threatened … . In the materialistic and technocratic civilisation that is increasingly threatening the life of mind and spirit in its original creative expression—the word—it seems particularly inhuman to deprive man of word-forms in one of their most grandiose manifestations.

The Archbishop of Westminster, John Cardinal Heenan—with whom a distraught Evelyn Waugh, aghast even at the initial liturgical changes he lived to see, carried on a lengthy correspondence—brought the issue before Pope Paul VI. The pope granted an indult for England and Wales for the celebration of the traditional Latin Mass on special occasions. Apart from an additional dispensation for elderly priests, though, that was the only allowance, anywhere, for the traditional rite.

That was how things stood until Pope John Paul II, prodded by French archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, broadened the indult in 1984 and again in 1988, urging the world's bishops to be "generous" in allowing the traditional Mass for those who wanted it. The generosity the pope asked for was not forthcoming: as of 2006, only a tiny fraction of one percent of all parish Masses are offered in the traditional rite.

The progressives who revised the Mass had won in a rout.

Then, in the late 1980s, came Monsignor Klaus Gamber. He was a liturgical scholar of great renown, who headed the liturgical institute at Regensburg and had brought out nearly three dozen volumes in the *Studia Patristica et Liturgica* and *Textus Patristici et Liturgici* series. It was Gamber's unimpeachable mainstream credentials that made his book *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* all the more shocking.

The book was a blistering attack. The new Mass, said Gamber, was pastorally, theologically, and aesthetically disastrous. "The new liturgical forms," he wrote, "well intentioned as they may have been at the beginning, did not give the people bread, but stones." It radically unsettled and disoriented the faithful and probably sent countless numbers away for good. And it was an abuse of power to boot: Gamber suggested that whether the pope actually had the authority to revise the Mass so radically was "debatable, to say the least."

Against those who have argued that anything promulgated by the Holy See is ipso facto traditional, Gamber absolutely insisted that the new liturgy constituted a "break with Church tradition." He suggested that the new rite, in practice, amounted to a humanistic celebration of the assembled congregation rather than the propitiatory sacrifice of traditional Catholic theology.

> We are now involved in a liturgy in which God is no longer the center of our attention. Today, the eyes of the faithful are no longer focused on God's Son having become Man hanging before us on the cross, or on the pictures of His saints, but on the human community assembled for a commemorative meal. The assembly of people is sitting there, face to face with the 'presider,' expecting from him, in accordance with the 'modern' spirit of the Church, not so much a transfer of God's grace, but primarily some good ideas and advice on how to deal with daily life and its challenges.

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And then Gamber did the unthinkable in the ecclesial climate of his day: he called for the restoration of the traditional rite "as the primary liturgical form for the celebration of Mass. It must become once more the norm of our faith and the symbol of Catholic unity throughout the world, a rock of stability in a period of upheaval and never-ending change."

As recently as the 1990s, it was unthinkable that someone who endorsed the conclusions of Gamber's book could ever be elected pope. But the current pontiff, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, did just that: in his preface to the French-language edition he gave the book his hearty endorsement, including its finding that Mass with the priest facing East with the people, rather than with the priest facing away from the tabernacle and toward the people, was the ancient tradition and should be restored. Ratzinger's endorsement of Gamber's book made headlines across Europe.

And in his preface to Gamber's book, speaking of the changes that were made to the Mass, Ratzinger added: "In the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it—as in a manufacturing process—with a fabrication, a banal on-the-spot product. Gamber, with the vigilance of a true prophet and the courage of a true witness, opposed this falsification …"

The word out of Rome these days is that Pope Benedict XVI is considering lifting all restrictions from the traditional rite, such that any priest of the Roman Rite could offer the traditional Mass without needing the special permission from his bishop—as required under John Paul II—that has so often been denied. This is exactly what Gamber called for and what Benedict has long believed. "The old rite should be granted much more generously to all those who desire it," he said in 1997, while still Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. "It's impossible to see what could be dangerous or unacceptable about that. A community is calling its very being into question when it suddenly declares that what until now was its holiest and highest possession is strictly forbidden and when it makes the longing for it seem downright indecent."

Over the summer, Marcia Christoff Kurapovna wrote in these pages about reconciliation efforts currently under way between Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. Resolution of the liturgical question in the West is central to any kind of reconciliation between the two.

THE ORTHODOX ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THE **MODERN MENTALITY** THAT CONCEIVES OF ANCIENT CONVEYORS OF THE FAITH MERELY AS **TEXTS IN NEED OF A GOOD EDITOR**.

It is not simply that the traditional Mass has much more in common with the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom than does the new Mass. The point is that the Orthodox have no desire to see their own liturgies vandalized or "reformed," and they are deeply suspicious of the modern mentality that conceives of ancient conveyors of the faith merely as texts in need of a good editor.

We live in strange times, in which nothing seems exempt from the forward march of ugliness and vulgarity. Architecture oscillates between the banal and the grotesque, the "art world" is a bad joke, and Hollywood hardly requires comment. We might have expected the Catholic Church, and Christians more generally, to remain entirely aloof from and unaffected by the spirit of vulgarization and narcissism that overtook the West in the 1960s.

But at the very time when the piety of the faithful most needed nourishment at the fount of tradition, and when the Western world needed more than ever to be reminded that tradition was more than something to be spat upon and discarded, the traditional Mass was taken away. Allen Tate, a convert to Catholicism and one of the Twelve Southerners who wrote the agrarian manifesto *I'll Take My Stand*, regretted that he had converted not long before this venerable institution, which until then had successfully resisted the worst aspects of modernity, seemed to be throwing in the towel.

That is why the traditional Mass is potentially such an important pedagogical device for the Western world. I have often heard it said that in "today's world" we need a simpler rite and one in the vernacular. But to the contrary: it is precisely in today's world, a world in which man believes himself bound by nothing, in which the traditional Mass is so obviously necessary. What generation has needed more than the present one to be told that the world does not revolve around it? In a world that believes that nothing is immune to change, that the family itself is subject to redefinition according to human whim, the piety and reverence of the traditional Latin Mass, in its beauty and stately reserve, and in its reservation of sacred tasks to the priest alone, reminds us that some things really are not to be touched by man. Here, in a nutshell, is the conservative's outlook on the world.

If Pope Benedict follows through on what he has said in the past about the need to make the old rite widely available again, its significance will extend well beyond just those who have formed their spiritual lives around it. One of the great treasures of Western civilization will at long last have been restored. Those who prefer the Muppets to the Moonlight Sonata—and who for over 35 years have done everything they could to deprive people of the liturgical equivalent of the Moonlight Sonata—will doubtless bellow in protest, but to the relief of a great many Catholics and their sympathizers, Monsignor Klaus Gamber will at last have been vindicated. ■

Thomas E. Woods Jr. is author of How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization, *a free chapter of which is available at ThomasEWoods.com.*

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MUSIC

Chanteuse of Strange Fruit

By Ralph de Toledano

HOW MANY ARE LEFT of the old jazz aficionados who listened to Billie Holiday decades ago in New York's West 52nd Street nightclubs? Not many. I still remember Billie singing "Strange Fruit" in the eddying smoke of Café Society. It was a Popular Front song about lynching—"strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees"—sung for a Popular Front audience in a Greenwich Village club. But it had its power and validity in the exquisite torture of her singing, in the ungainly beauty of a dark face flatly delineated by the baby spots.

Those were Billie's great days, when jazz was the real and the true, when she was recording to the sprung rhythms of Teddy Wilson's piano, the outbursts of Artie Shaw's clarinet, or the clean line of Bunny Berigan's cornet. Those were the days of "Billie's Blues," out of the deep south via Harlem; of "Summertime" in pounding accents that would have startled George Gershwin; of two evocative pop tunes, "Easy Living" and "Foolin' Myself"; of the great Commodore recordings. They can still be heard scattered throughout today's CD reissues—Billie before the demons moved in.

Then the rich boys of the Left took over, and so did the drugs. Billie continued to sing, but she had a monkey on her back—and the corruption of courts and hospitals and the futile "cures"—a story of degeneration and regeneration and ultimate collapse, a chronology not new to those who lived in jazz.

Billie is long dead, but to those of us who knew her she left an unforgettable legacy of memories and music. For there was no one quite like Billie as a singer of jazz or pops. Any song, good or bad, acquired a new dimension when she sang it. Her phrasing was impeccable, and her sense of the *rubato*—that straying behind or around the beat that characterizes the best jazz—was perfect. She could wander from the melody until that split second those with a trained ear know and then return with a glorious resolution. Toward the end, her plangently full voice developed a kind of astringency, but she never lost the mastery of phrase or the sense of a song's inner logic.

Her old album "Solitude"—named after Duke Ellington's seductively velvet ballad—is a case in point. From Cole Porter's adolescently ironic "Love for Sale" to the Princeton Triangle Club's "East of the Sun," Billie took over these songs, and "Love for Sale's" somewhat mawkish lyrics of vice as seen by undergraduate eyes became poignant and hard as vice can be. "Easy to Love" and "Everything I Have Is Yours," which in the '30s I hummed on forgotten dance floors, became jazz *lieder* when they were transfigured by Billie.

"Body and Soul," another old album, allowed her to elaborate on that great standard, to illuminate "Embraceable You," and to invigorate those two Gershwin movie tunes, "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" and "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers made those tunes popular in a musical you could once see on the Late Show, but Billie stole them. In an album inappropriately called "Billie's Blues," an oldie like "Just One More Chance," which that gusty crooner Russ Columbo mooed into prominence, became a plea for the return that parted lovers seek. And "You Took Advantage of Me," a specialty of Bing Crosby in his soprano days with the Paul Whiteman hot section, surrendered to Billie.

With her death, who was there to take Billie Holiday's place? There was, of course, Ella Fitzgerald—in the 1930s the tall and gawky singer who belted out songs with Chick Webb's Savoy Ballroom band to the delight of Harlem and points south. With success, Ella acquired *embonpoint* and placidity, with nowhere any of Billie's *cri de coeur* intensity or artistry. There was Lena Horne, svelte and fashionable, who sang many of the songs that Billie made real. But neither the phrasing nor the instrument nor the emotion were there. Close your eyes and you saw the attractive figure and the formidably regular teeth. But you also heard a voice that occasionally wavered in pitch and tended to harshness. Lena Horne made Noel Coward's "Mad About the Boy," with its faux sophistication, a kind of signature—but it was neither Gertrude Lawrence (thin-textured, cold, and sardonic) nor jazz. It was a pale carbon copy of a pale carbon copy, with a touch of Broadway bitchiness.

You returned inevitably to the memories of Billie—the Billie we loved and applauded in smoky nightclubs; the Billie in white satin who stood before big-name bands in the vast caverns of now vanished movie palaces; the Billie who all her life could sing and mean it, "If you let me love you, it's for sure I'll love you all the way"; the Billie whose records we had waited for and spun until the 78 rpm steel needles had vanquished them.

If your mind so orders, you remember the excitement of Billie's great days. And as you listen to her again, you may mutter with no *gaudeamus igitur*, "*Post jucundam juventutem, post molestam senectutem, nos habebit humus*"—"After joyous youth, after troubled old age, the earth will have us." And perhaps you smile. ■

HER **PLANGENTLY FULL VOICE** DEVELOPED A KIND OF **ASTRINGENCY**, BUT SHE **NEVER LOST THE MASTERY OF PHRASE** OR THE SENSE OF A **SONG'S INNER LOGIC**.

Ralph de Toledano is a former editor of Newsweek *and the author or editor of over 20 books, including* Frontiers of Jazz.

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We Need to Talk

Five years on from the WTC tragedy, the war on terror is not only far from won, the blunder of Iraq is radicalizing countless young Muslims the world over. It seems at times that this administration is not only dumb but also deaf. Cheney recently said that they must be doing something right because in the five years since the attack, al-Qaeda has not come back to kill more Americans. In that he's correct, but try telling that to the families of close to 3,000 American soldiers who have died in a useless war and the tens of thousands lying crippled in their hospital beds.

Only two months ago, the alleged plot to blow up American planes over the Atlantic suggested that the threat to American citizens all over the world is real and very lethal. Faced with the prospect of nonstop war and bloodshed, as those cowardly neocons would have it, what are our options? That's an easy one. Sit down and talk to the bastards, as the great General Douglas MacArthur would have said were he alive.

There are plenty of historical precedents. Talking to terrorists is supposedly a no-no, but everyone, including the unbending Israelis, has done it throughout history. Successive British governments had one mantra where the IRA was concerned: we do not talk to terrorists until they put their guns down. Well, the Iron Lady did, off the record, as did John Major, off the record, and then Tony Blair talked on the record and now there is peace in Northern Ireland. In fact, the war that began early in the 20th century and heated up after 1972 is finally over. Yes, there are bodies of innocents all over the place, but peace has finally come to that miserable part of the world.

In Spain, things are not yet hunky dory, but the Spanish are talking to ETA, the Basque separatists, and there are fewer assassinations and deaths of innocent people.

And let's not forget the greatest triumph of chatter over machine-gun clatter: South Africa. Who would have believed that the tough-talking, rigid as hell Boers would sit down and deal with the "bloodthirsty terrs," as they called the ANC. It's not perfect, and crime is at an all-time high in South African cities, but at least the massacres are a thing of the past and life goes on much better than before.

Even the Israelis make a semblance of talking to the PLO. All they have to do is also talk to the democratically elected Hamas, something they refuse to do. Instead, they assassinate Hamas's leaders and keep a stranglehold on the Gaza Strip. This small strip of land where 1.5 million Palestinians live has been under siege by the Israelis for three months. 251 Palestinians have been killed in 270 air raids. But one hears people say that Gaza is a terrorist state run by terrorists. It is in Israel's long-term interest to talk, but no one at this time is listening.

Mind you, fanatics like the neocons aside, the first thing to consider before launching any conversation is what does al-Qaeda want? Its agenda seems quite clear. The first is for America to take an equitable stance where Israel and the Palestinians are concerned. The second is for U.S. and foreign troops to leave Muslim lands. And the third—the easiest of all to accommodate—is for America to stop supporting "apostate" rulers in Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan.

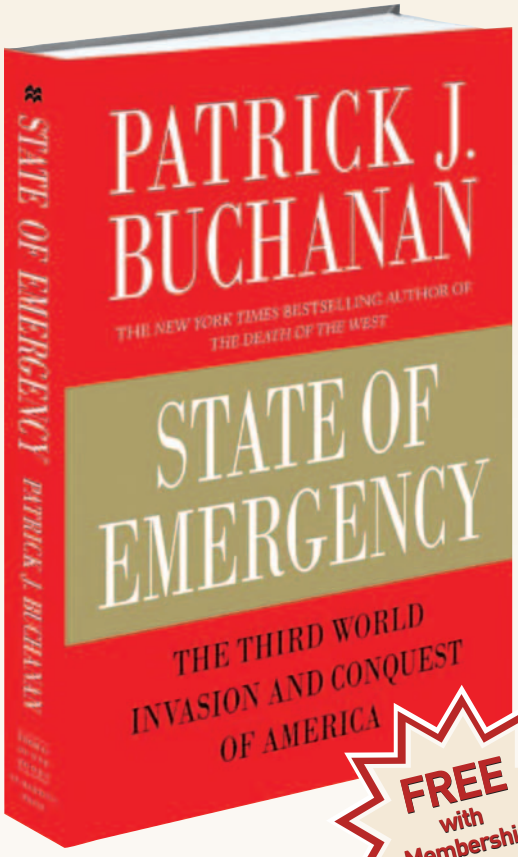
Let's just dream for a second. Imagine if my colleague Pat Buchanan had been elected president in 1992, 1996, or better yet, in 2000, none of the above would be demanded because they would not be an issue. We would have remained a loyal ally of Israel, but we would have restrained the wild ones now running the show. (Israelis are anything but dumb; they would have gotten the message and played nice. There would now be two countries at peace living side by side.) We would have stopped dealing with the kleptocrats in Saudi Arabia and pulled our troops out of hostile Muslim lands. Fortress America sounds awfully good to me, but then I don't make my living from large oil corporations like the Bushes and the Cheneys.

FORTRESS AMERICA SOUNDS AWFULLY GOOD TO ME, BUT THEN I DON'T MAKE MY LIVING FROM **LARGE OIL CORPORATIONS** LIKE THE **BUSHES** AND THE **CHENEYS**.

Let's face it. Bin Laden has made overtures. He is on record as calling on Americans in October 2002 over the Internet to "deal with us and interact with us on the basis of mutual interests and benefits." A cynic might laugh, but at least it's an opening. Engagement with an enemy is not an endorsement of him. Sadat, after all, talked to his sworn enemy, the one-time terrorist Menachem Begin. He paid for it with his life, but he will go down in history as a man of courage who gave his life in the cause of peace. That's more than the clowns who are reveling in nonstop war fought by others will be known for. ■

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From Pat Buchanan: Why Unrestricted Immigration Amounts to National Suicide



Civilizations die by suicide, not murder, says Patrick Buchanan, and liberalism is the ideology of Western suicide. Its ideas, pursued to their logical end, will prove fatal. And none of those ideas is as certain to bring our civilization to an unhappy end as the proposition that America's borders must be open to any and all comers, legal and illegal.

In *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, Buchanan explains why the very life of our nation is at stake in the immigration debate. If immigration and border controls aren't reintroduced, it will be the end of America as we know it — and soon.

America, says Buchanan, could soon be facing its last chance to stave off national suicide. In *State of Emergency*, he provides a comprehensive primer for all politicians, activists, and concerned citizens who want to stop the flood of immigration before it's too late.

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